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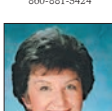
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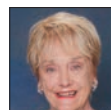
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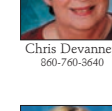
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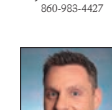
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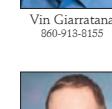
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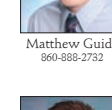
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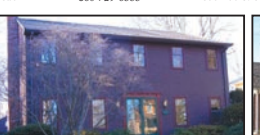
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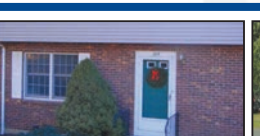
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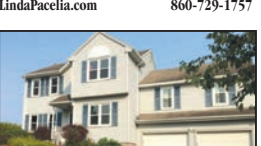
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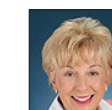
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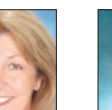
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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"I've been in situations when I thought my life was in danger and I know what it feels like." - *Police Chief James Cetran*

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ON THE COVER

After more than 50 years caring for the oral health of hundreds of area residents, Dr. Thomas J. Gworek is saying goodbye.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
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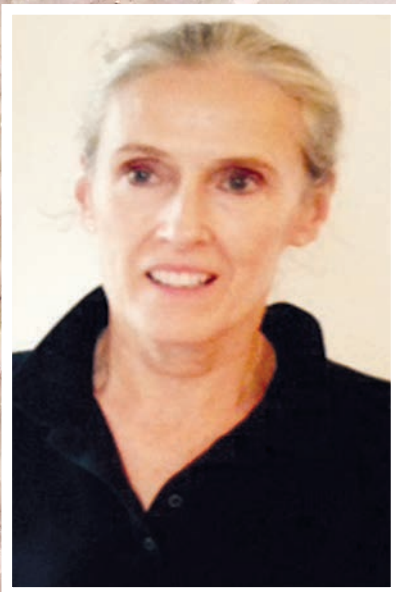
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A space of her own

Kennedy was part of artistic residency on Governors Island

by Alicia B. Smith
Staff Writer

Artist Brigid Kennedy had a blank canvas to work with during her two-month residency on Governors Island in New York City this past summer. The canvas, in this case, was not material stretched on a wooden frame, but rather two empty bedrooms in an abandoned 19th century Victorian house.

Kennedy, who teaches art at Conard High School in West Hartford and is a member of the Sculptors Guild, was invited to participate in the installation with several other artists.

It was a unique experience for the woman who often works in her home studio in Wethersfield. She made several trips to the island, located off of the tip of Manhattan. She called her piece the "State of Play."

It was inspired by African architecture and made from recycled materials, including such things as tomato cages, cardboard and even old slides Kennedy had taken during a trip to Africa in the 1970s when she was an undergraduate. She also incorporated earlier pieces she had made.

The artist created some of the sculpture in her studio and transported it to the old house; other pieces were created on site. As she began to fill the space, she had an opportunity to improvise and add elements as she worked from one room to another.

She began this project in July and had until the end of September to complete it, allowing time to adjust her work as she saw fit.

"Some of it was planned, some of it was improvised. I worked off my intuition," Kennedy said.

She also worked off what she found in the room, such as a wall of cracked paint. She decided to decorate the area and use the cracks as part of her larger piece.

This paper wave added texture to the sculptures and drew viewers into the next room.



Tiffany Want, a student of artist Brigid Kennedy, helped with the artist's summer project.

Kennedy was still working on the installation when the school year started and she asked her students if anyone would be interested in helping her.

Tiffany Wang, a senior in her AP Studio Art class, along with her mom, Charlene, went down to New York on two Saturdays. Tiffany was responsible for creating a paper wave around a doorframe from rolled-up pieces of torn paper that she then stuck on the wall.

She also worked to attach one-inch mirrors in a pattern around the room.

"There was a lot of repetition, but everything was different," Tiffany said of the repeated elements that were part of the piece.

"Tiffany just did an amazing job," Kennedy said.

"It was a neat experience to take someone else's idea and get what Mrs. Kennedy wanted and then work to create the wall," Tiffany said. "To see her work was inspiring."

"I so admire you, Tiffany, for coming down, for going outside our little room we have here," the teacher said.

In addition to placing her sculptures on the rooms' floors, Kennedy put some on the deep window ledges. She also suspended spheres above the sculptures on the floors and decorated other elements in the

rooms such as the doors, floors and door frames.

The artist intended the piece to be traversed from one room to another by viewers.

"One of the nice things about it is it was pretty open ended," she said. "That's unusual."

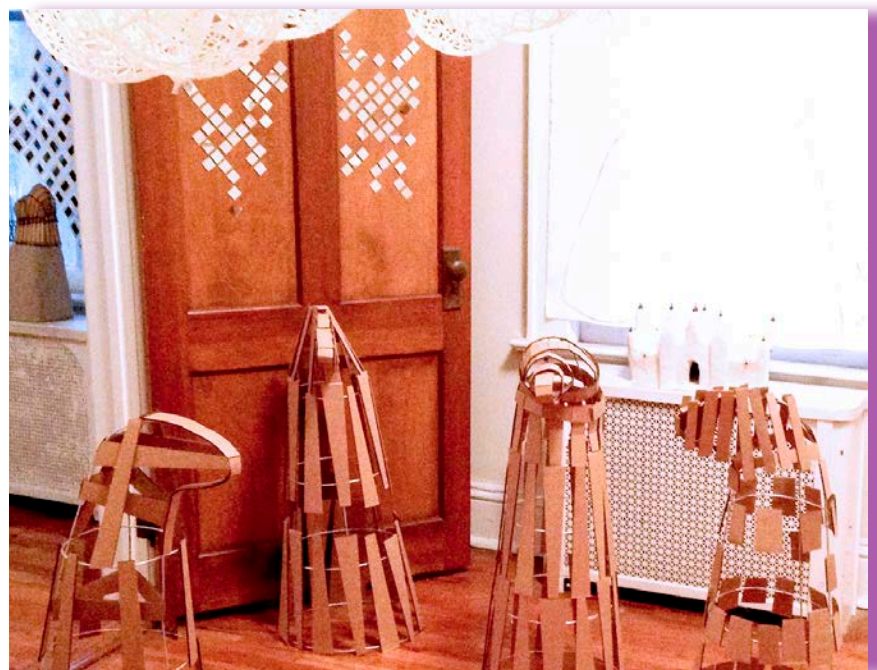
What she especially enjoys about an installation such as this is that the art becomes part of the space.

"I'm actually part of the environment," she said. "The viewer is embraced, surrounded. They walk away with the perception that it's also physical."

Kennedy also appreciated the fact that the entire piece would look different depending on the time of day and how the light came in through the windows.

In a card she had printed up about her piece, she wrote, "This installation is the current situation embodied; it strikes a balance between design and improvisation, grounded in rhythm. The work draws on memory, imagination and play, claiming and transforming this elegant, abandoned place."

"This residency allowed me to revisit familiar forms, ideas and materials while investigating the archaeology of place. Materials, structures are temporal;



Artist Brigid Kennedy used recycled material – including tomato cages and cardboard – in her summer art installation project.

everything changes."

Sculpture traditionally tends to be large, heavy permanent pieces, but that was turned upside down in that Kennedy's sculptures had a definitive time line of when they would be on view and available to be seen.

She had to keep in mind that she was limited in what she could do, mainly due to the reality that she owns a small car and had to carry pieces and materials from

Connecticut to the island, a trip that involved a ferry ride to what is now a national park.

Another challenge was competing with the decorative elements in the older house.

Kennedy, who has grown up in Buffalo, has taught art at Conard for nine years and has experience teaching at the collegiate level, too, including a three-year stint at Trinity College in Hartford as a visiting artist. **WL**

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Dealing with tough times

Police face additional stress and challenges on the street

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Police Chief James Cetran has enjoyed a long history in local law enforcement and has personally witnessed many changes. But, in all his years wearing a badge, he has never seen officers operating under such heightened scrutiny and pressure.

High-profile incidents in places like Ferguson, Mo., Baltimore and Chicago have received massive nationwide news coverage. In these instances, and others, police actions were questioned and racial issues became a significant part of the equation.

In each case, a person of color died at the hands of police. There has also



Police Chief James Cetran

photo by Mark Jahne

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been an increase in unprovoked attacks upon police officers by members of the public, in some cases resulting in the officers' deaths.

There's a name for it – the Ferguson Effect. Cetran and other law enforcement leaders worry that, in trying to correct alleged wrongs, officers may second-guess themselves or not be as aggressive as they need to be in enforcing the law and rooting out crime.

"They don't trust the police anymore," he said of the public in some communities, especially those who are members of racial minority groups. "That's the Ferguson Effect."

Cetran is aware that officers operate in stressful conditions and are called upon to make split-second decisions, especially when it comes to using force, that can have a lasting impact.

"They're going to make mis-

takes. They're human," he said.

The way to keep fatal mistakes at a minimum is to practice better hiring and provide more extensive training. Wethersfield has practiced both of these strategies over the years.

There is already data showing that states, including Connecticut, are taking a softer approach to crime and incarceration.

"I believe you're going to see an exponential rise in the crime rate. The property crime rate has

that race through an officer's mind during a high-stress incident.

"I've been in situations when I thought my life was in danger and I know what it feels like," he said.

Officers are required to record the race of every motorist they stop. This and other data including gender, ethnicity, the reason for and duration of the stop is then analyzed and reports are created that tell the department and public how local law enforcement is performing.

Police also have to give each motorist a card indicating how he or she can file a formal complaint if they believe the officer did not perform in a professional manner.

The most recent state report upsets him because it accuses the Wethersfield Police Department of unfairly targeting Hispanic motorists; 31 percent of all motor vehicle stops in town involved Hispanic

"I've been in situations when I thought my life was in danger and I know what it feels like."

– Police Chief James Cetran

"The police are more professional today than when I was hired in the 1970s," he said.

He worries that the Ferguson Effect will result in fewer motor vehicle stops and less proactive law enforcement.

[already] gone up," he said.

He fears there is a growing dramatic divide between the public and police, as well as high levels of racial tension.

Cetran said it is hard for the public to understand the thoughts



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drivers, but the town's Hispanic population is only 9 percent.

Cetran said the report is unfair because it does not take into account people who live elsewhere but travel through town to dine, shop, work or for other reasons.

If one takes the two southern-most ZIP codes of Hartford, attaches them to Wethersfield and then looks at that as a single geographic area, the Hispanic population of that area is 50 percent. Seen in that context, the chief said a 31 percent stop rate is within the norm.

In addition, the chief pointed out that officers cannot tell the race of motorists they stop at night until they walk up to the car. Most of these stops result in verbal warnings, not tickets, another indicator he uses to argue his case.

"I truly believe that I do not have any officers who are racist," the chief said.

He added that if a Wethersfield officer behaved in a racist manner, immediate action would be taken to dismiss that officer from the force.

Cetran said it is a proven fact

that stopping cars equals less crime. Police must have a legal reason to stop a motorist.

When they do, it can lead to the discovery of illegal drugs, weapons, wanted felons and more.

One suggestion to resolve future high-profile issues is the use of body cameras by officers on the street. Some departments already have cameras in the cruisers, and this would be the next technological step to determine which party is at fault in an incident that escalates into violence.

"I think body cameras are a good idea," the chief said.

But they do not come without controversy. Dashboard cameras in cruisers switch on automatically once the flashing lights are activated, but the officer must manually operate a body camera.

What happens if he or she forgets to turn it on? What if he or she turns it off for a moment and forgets to turn it on again? Could this be argued as trying to hide police malfeasance when the case goes to court?

Cetran said Connecticut has a specific policy for how body cameras should be utilized.

Some departments have tried them and then took them off the street because of these questions and what he called the restrictive nature of that policy.

He cited Berlin as one such department that tried and then discontinued body cameras.

Cetran said his officers receive training that teaches them to treat all citizens in a fair and impartial manner. They also go through critical incident training to reduce the possibility of a fatal incident.

"A lot of our officers are CIT trained," he said.

This training teaches them how to deal with all kinds of people, including those who may suffer from mental illness.

No one in his department has deployed a Taser for an entire year, a fact Cetran attributes to his officers becoming more skilled at talking people down in highly agitated situations. He prefers that kind of calm and reasoned approach to the use of

a Taser's electronic shock technology whenever possible.

Cetran is also a proponent of community policing. Police departments that create strong relations with various constituencies within the community are usually able to handle controversial issues without accusations and divisive rhetoric.

Examples of community policing he cited include National Night Out, the D.A.R.E. program for youth, resource officers in the middle and high schools and the Citizens Police Academy. The department also has a Facebook page that receives a lot of traffic.

"Showing citizens what we do and how we do it saves me a lot of time and energy," Cetran said. "I think we have a good relationship with our community."

He said Wethersfield has the lowest crime rate of all the suburbs that abut Hartford, due to its proactive police tactics. The chief considers it ironic that his department is now being criticized for what he considers a strategy of success. **WL**

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photos by Mark Janne



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Sons of the American Revolution

Patriotic connection

Sons of the American Revolution help keep early U.S. history alive

by Mark Jahne
Editor

They believe in patriotism and remembering the long-ago contributions of the men and women who founded this country. They call themselves the Sons of the American Revolution.

The Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth Branch No. 7 of the national organization recently met at Lucky Lou's Bar and Grill in Old Wethersfield. Members come primarily from central Connecticut.

On this particular day, their guest speaker was Amy Northrop Wittorff, executive director of the Wethersfield Historical Society. She spoke on a number of topics related to the American Revolution and Connecticut's famous Nathan Hale.

Hale's last known letter is in the archives of the SAR, she said.

Every meeting ends with the members recalling the importance of the men who created the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, an independent Supreme Court and a land where all people can live in freedom.

Chris Nichols, president of the local branch, said they try to choose historic venues for meetings. Nichols said the group gives out awards, assists Eagle Scouts and also contributes money to restore historic plaques.

At this meeting, they presented an Exemplary Patriotism Award to Town Councilor Michael Rell in recognition of his ongoing commitment to flying the American flag outside his home on the Broad Street Green.

"Our members are predominantly interested in history," Nichols said. "We have a color guard. We call them a living history museum."

Eric Hart of Wethersfield joined the organization this past year. He can trace his ancestry to those early patriots.

"I've been into genealogy for a long time. I've been engrained in history for a long time," he said. "I like what they do. It's a really good organization."

Dave Goodale of Newington is another member. Goodale Drive in town is named after his great-uncle.

"I just enjoy history. I'm president of the Deming-Young Farm Foundation," he said.

He added that family history is also important to him. Goodale particularly enjoys studying the history of the American Revolution and World War II.

The National Society, Sons of the American Revolution, was organized April 30, 1889, the 100th anniversary of the inauguration of George



Wethersfield resident Eric Hart, left, congratulates fellow resident and Town Councilor Michael Rell for receiving an award from the Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth Branch No. 7, Sons of the American Revolution. Hart is an SAR member.

Washington as the country's first president. National headquarters are in Louisville, Ky. It was preceded by an organization founded in California called the Sons of Revolutionary Sires.

The SAR was conceived as a fraternal and civic society composed of lineal descendants of the men who wintered at Valley Forge, signed the Declaration of Independence, fought in the battles of the American Revolution, served in the Continental Congress, or otherwise supported the cause of American independence.

The national society was chartered by an act of Congress June 9, 1906. That charter was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt, who was a member of the SAR.

The SAR is considered a lineage society. Membership is restricted to those who can trace their family tree back to a point of having an ancestor who supported the cause of American independence during the years 1774 to 1783. **WL**

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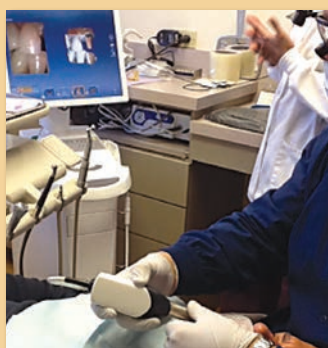
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Marching on St. Patrick's Day

**Wamester and Bellas will lead
town's parade contingent**

When the Wethersfield contingent steps off in Hartford's 2016 St. Patrick's Day Parade, the group will be led by Noranne Wamester and Barbara Bellas. Bellas is this year's town marshal and Wamester is the town honoree of Irish ancestry.

They were honored as part of a dinner Jan. 23 at the Pitkin Community Center held to raise money for the local contingent. Participants enjoyed a corned beef and cabbage dinner and dancing to the Billy Egan Band.

The parade is sponsored by the Central Connecticut Celtic Cultural Committee.

Noranne Wamester was born in Hartford and has lived in Wethersfield most of her life. She is married to William "Bill" Wamester and they will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary this June.

They have four children and 10 grandchildren. Wamester is the daughter of the late Thomas and Mary Durkin Scully. She was predeceased by her brother Vincent Scully, who was the Irish honoree for the town of Windsor's parade contingent in 2001.

She treasures her Irish heritage and said she has wonderful memories of the many stories about the cousins in Ireland told by the Scullys and the Durkins.

She graduated from the University of St. Joseph with a degree in early childhood educa-

tion and taught in the Wethersfield school system. After a long hiatus to raise her children, she took a position at St. Augustine School in Hartford before answering the call for a director of religious education at the Church of the Incarnation in town.

She earned a master's degree in pastoral ministry from the University of St. Joseph and completed post-graduate work there in ministry and religious studies. She holds a certificate in spiritual direction from Mercy by the Sea in Madison, as well as a certificate in bereavement ministry.

Wamester is the pastoral associate and director of faith formation at the Church of the Incarnation, and has been there for 33 years. She is a retreat director and a spiritual director as well.

Her ministry has enabled her to reach out to the bereaved, from planning funeral services, to presiding at wake services and to following up with bereavement support groups. She said she feels blessed to work with the Rev. James Moran and the professional staff at the church.

Wamester oversees many volunteers in education and is grateful for their dedication and love of sharing their faith with the children and teenagers.

"Faith formation is the secret ingredient to raising children in the faith and is central to family life" she said.

Barbara Bellas grew up in

town with her parents Joseph Paul and Marjorie Harris; brothers, Joe, Rob, Will and Jim; and sisters Joanne and Diane. She is married to George Bellas and has 12-year-old twins James and Joseph, sixth-graders at Webb School. They are all active members of St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Hartford.

Bellas graduated from Wethersfield High School in 1982 and Central Connecticut State University in 1988, where she studied business management and participated in a co-op work program. She worked at various insurance companies for 18 years prior to raising her boys.

She obtained a group fitness certification and continues to teach fitness classes. Bellas is employed as an office manager at a metal shop in Hartford.

She was a member of the Wethersfield Junior Women's Club for more than 10 years and held



Noranne Wamester



Barbara Bellas

courtesy photos

Bellas is a 13-year board member of the Richard M. Keane Foundation and co-chairs the annual Keane Foundation 5K. She volunteers for the foundation's annual Cove Side Carnival and co-chairs the grant committee.

She helped lead the fund raising for the Loretta's Dream Pavilion in Mill Woods Park, built in memory of her friend Loretta Nakos Pemble.

Bellas is active in the Webb PTO – she was co-president for two years and continues to chair and participate in fundraisers. She was the 2014 recipient of the WSPC Community Volunteer Award and a 2015 recipient of the Superintendent's Parent Volunteer Award.

She is a member of the Wethersfield Schools Parent Council and established a running club program in 2014 at each of the elementary schools. She wrote the curriculum, oversees the coaches and is the head coach at Webb. **WL**

board positions including membership, secretary and president, and chaired many fundraisers. Bellas was a member of the Wethersfield Home Garden Club for 10 years and served as president.

She coordinated the first Mikey's Place 5K for Mary and Dan Daversa in 1999 to raise money for the creation of a wheelchair-accessible playground in memory of their son Mikey.



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An annual golf tournament serves as a fundraiser for the foundation.

Keane Foundation continues to reap good fortune

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Judy Keane could not be more pleased. The charitable foundation she launched 15 years ago in memory of her late husband, Richard, continues to thrive and be an integral part of the community.

All of its activities are both well attended and fully funded. As Keane, president of the foundation, announced this past year, surplus funds are being offered as grants to other nonprofit organizations in town.

"That's our new focus. There's no sense in having a bank account that's flush when that money can be used for kids' programs," she said. "We've kind of built capital in the community."

The most recent fundraiser, sales of Christmas luminaria, was more successful than she expected, particularly when one considers that it rained on Christmas Eve 2014 and many residents had them left over.

People came from other towns, as well as from out of state, to purchase the votive candles that are placed in white paper bags along the street. The result was an increase in sales.

"We had one of our best years ever for the luminaria," she said.

The annual golf tournament held in partnership with UNICO is scheduled for May 16 and she said that's a sure winner. The foundation's annual Cove Side Carnival this past fall was also a success.

She thanked Kathy Bagley and the town parks and recreation staff for their help with the carnival. Volunteers are needed for the 5K run coming up in June.

Keane is grateful for all of the community support and will continue to offer grants as long as her foundation is able to cover its operating expenses with the remaining money. There is a rainy day reserve set aside for unexpected contingencies.

Among the grant recipients this past year are the town's food pantry and popular chair yoga program at the Wethersfield Senior Center.

Six of the seven public schools also received Keane Foundation grants. These programs include yoga in the classroom, after-school intramural sports, Hartford Stage visiting drama programs, writer's workshop, a hip-hop program at Highcrest and Webb schools, and after-school enrichment activities at Charles Wright School.

"That may be a model for us,"

Courtesy photo



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photo by Mark Jahne



Children participate in a winter vacation arts and crafts program sponsored by the Richard M. Keane Foundation at the Pitkin Community Center.

she said of the Charles Wright program.

The next deadline for grants is March 30 and application forms are available at keanefoundation.org.

"The United Way continues to be a great source of funds for us and it is so easy for people to donate that

way through their employer's United Way campaign. They just have to write in the Richard M. Keane Foundation," Keane said.

She added the foundation might move its current programs from the 9/11 Memorial Sports Center, located within the Pitkin Community

Center, to the various schools. That would eliminate the most expensive part of the programs, the cost of bus-ing the children from their schools to Pitkin.

"The goal over the next year or two is to transition to that," she said.

happier things, more positive things. But, we also have to remember what happened," she said.

The foundation is part of the Keane on Kids Coalition, which includes the Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative, town social

"We brainstorm and talk about how we can help each other, and that's huge."

– Judy Keane

The foundation would continue to use the sports center for other programs and activities.

Keane is pleased that the foundation is flush not only with money, but also with numerous volunteers. Many are middle and high school students and some of them later become paid staff.

"We've been blessed with a lot of volunteers. ... I get calls from kids all the time," she said.

Keane also spoke of the more solemn event the foundation hosts, its annual 9/11 Picnic of Remembrance.

"I'm glad that we've moved into

services, parks and recreation, public library, health district and school district. It meets every six weeks.

"We brainstorm and talk about how we can help each other, and that's huge," she said.

Howie Greenblatt is vice president of the foundation. He was in on the ground floor and gives much of the credit for its success to Keane.

"It's a privilege to work with the great people we have on the board, especially Judy. She's an inspiration," he said. "We were all novices at fund raising. We just had a vision of where we wanted to go."

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ive and the rest is history. He is delighted that the foundation is in such good financial shape.

"Our costs have been minimal. It's a volunteer effort," Greenblatt said. "We're changing our thrust from running programs to giving grants. There is a shift in direction, but our original mission hasn't changed."

The foundation publishes a newsletter that can be found in the centerfold of this issue of Wethersfield LIFE. Keane encourages readers to pull it out and keep it until the next newsletter is published in six months.

She is also looking for ways to further help the town. One of the issues on her radar is child hunger.

"We are a changing community. There is a lot of hidden poverty in Wethersfield," Keane said. "There are kids who are not getting the nourishment they need." **WL**



Courtesy photo

Children enrolled in school running clubs throng to participate in the foundation's annual 5K run.

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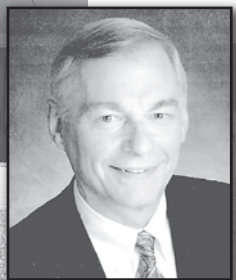


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New sports option

Youth lacrosse program is off to a promising start

Mark Jahne
Editor

Interest in lacrosse among young people is growing across the nation and that's true in town as well. The new Wethersfield Youth Lacrosse league is attracting a great deal of attention, and organizers are optimistic that it will have a long and happy future.

President Dan O'Connor and Vice President Paul Lisella lead the league, with Ralph D'Amato and Gianna Ehrlich as heads of the boys and girls divisions, respectively.

There was no organized lacrosse program in town, either recreational or scholastic, prior to the formation of this league, they said.

"It's the fastest-growing sport across the country," O'Connor said. "We will run it as a parks and recreation program."

Many members of his family played the game while growing up, but he was not one of them. D'Amato and Ehrlich played at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and Springfield College, respectively.

"I want to get my daughter

involved in the sport," Ehrlich said.

She played lacrosse while growing up in New Jersey before taking her skills to the college level. She's also the goalie coach for the Windsor High School girls lacrosse team.

Recreation Department told him about the current level of interest, so he decided to schedule a clinic this past November. Rocky Hill High School players assisted with the event.

"With any new sport, getting in at the beginning level builds confidence for kids."

- Ralph D'Amato

"My son had the opportunity to play in Glastonbury last year and it was a wonderful experience for him," D'Amato said. "With any new sport, getting in at the beginning level builds confidence for kids."

The new program is part of the larger Connecticut Valley Youth Lacrosse. Other CVYL towns include West Hartford and Rocky Hill. Play will begin in the spring.

"Ten years ago, I tried doing this and I had a lot of interest," O'Connor said.

Back then, nobody else stepped up to help him. The town Parks and

"Volunteers really started coming in. We had 150 kids show up," he said.

He added that 140 have already signed up for the new program. The boys program is already at capacity; there are still spaces left for girls. Play will be conducted in three divisions: grades three and four, grades five and six and grades seven and eight. There will also be a co-ed Rising Stars division for children in grades kindergarten to two.

Lacrosse is not one of the sports options at Wethersfield High, but

O'Connor is hoping the school will add it and see WYL as a feeder program.

All games in its initial season will be played at Cove Park. Weather permitting, play will commence in April and continue until early June. There is a \$100 enrollment fee.

"The parents have been great," O'Connor said. "It's not too late to sign up."

Several parents have already volunteered to help with various aspects of the program. Those willing to serve as coaches will be invited to attend training clinics. Coaches, other volunteers and business sponsorships are all being sought.

O'Connor said the program is part of U.S. Lacrosse, an important alliance because it provides insurance should players sustain injuries. **WL**

Anyone interested in learning more about Wethersfield Youth Lacrosse can contact O'Connor at 860-563-0672. Enrollment can be done online on the parks and recreation page at wethersfieldct.com.

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Student Annette Dunn learns how to block a strike from TIPS instructor Jaye Veley.

photos by Mark Jahne

Protecting yourself

TIPS program teaches how to escape from harm's way

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Most people do not know what to do if they are suddenly faced with an assailant threatening them with a weapon or other physical violence. Jaye Veley wants to change that.

Veley, a longtime resident and martial arts instructor, is the founder of Tactical Instruction for Practical Self-defense. His program teaches adults how to be intense, quick and focused when responding to such a threat.

He bills it as defensive strategies to combat common assaults. Veley, 56, has been teaching the Parks and Recreation karate classes for 12 years, and has been doing martial arts himself since he was 12 years old.

The program is offered through the town Parks and Recreation Department

and classes are held in an auxiliary gymnasium at Silas Deane Middle School. The classes began in October.

The most recent cycle had four participants, all of them women. Men can sign up as well. Veley wants his students to learn not only the techniques, but to gain the confidence that they can protect themselves from harm if needed.

Most aggressors expect their victims to panic or cower before them. Applying one or more of the TIPS techniques can surprise the attacker and perhaps even temporarily disable him or her, thus enabling the threatened person to safely escape.

"We empower them and give them confidence. The whole premise is to strike and create a window of opportunity for a safe escape," Veley said.



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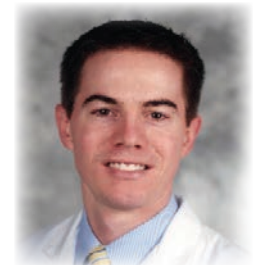
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Instructor Lou Roberts assists him in classes. The class cycle is four nights of lessons running for 90 minutes each evening. On this particular evening the students spent their entire time on the mat working on a variety of techniques.

"Tonight, we're going over knife and gun take-away. Next week we

choke holds. He also showed them how to fend off a knife or gun without being cut or shot.

"They know how to react to those things now. We teach multiple types of techniques for one situation. I simplify every technique," he said.

"I always thought I was going to outwit somebody. I've had a whole

"We empower them and give them confidence. The whole premise is to strike and create a window of opportunity for a safe escape."

– Jaye Veley

have rape escape," Veley said.

A key component of the curriculum is the use of repetition to make sure the lessons he imparts take hold for the long-term. Students learn the proper strike points they can use to fend off an attacker.

They also learn how to break out of holds. Veley demonstrated how to break free from wrist grabs and

different mind shift," student Stacy Veley said.

She talked about the confidence she gained from taking the class and the need to commit to protecting yourself.

"Like he says, you're in or you're out," she said.

Annette Dunn works in the inner city and wants to be able to go



Veley uses a soft dummy to represent an attacker. Students learn how to strike the various pressure points that will enable them to escape harm.

about her daily routine without fear. TIPS gave her the confidence and skills to do just that.

"It taught me to feel strong and safe. You realize how strong you really are," she said. "I realize that I really can protect myself."

Dunn liked the fact that the class was taught at a basic and understandable level. She found the instructors to be both cooperative and patient. Another benefit was

better balance and coordination.

"I came from a very sheltered background," Chris Lamberti said. "I've learned how to react. He's right the way he's going about it."

Lamberti added that the class has helped her in general to better deal with uncomfortable situations in her life. **WL**

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While their classmates walked across the oobleck, other students sat alongside and took notes. Their task was to jot down their observations and then write about what they saw.



Science melds with fun

Just what the heck is oobleck, anyhow?

by Mark Jahne
Editor

For decades, elementary school science students have learned that everything around them is either a solid, a liquid or a gas. That is, unless it's oobleck.

For the uninitiated, oobleck is a type of slime that originated in a Dr. Seuss book. As the story went, it is a unique substance capable of gumming up the works of an entire kingdom.

Over the years, teachers have created their own oobleck as a fun classroom experiment, and that was the case Dec. 16 at the CREC Discovery Academy. All it takes is water and corn starch. Food coloring can be added if desired.

Second grade teacher Sarah Worley came up with the idea while watching a TV science show at 2:30 a.m. one recent morning. She mixed up a batch of the goop in a rectangular box and invited staff and students to take off their shoes and walk across the substance that is both a liquid and a solid at the same time.

Even Principal Lynn Toper gave it a try. The children shouted, "Do it," every time a faculty member took a turn. Worley danced in the oobleck box as part of the fun.

"This is the culmination of our solids and liquids unit," Worley said. "They were throwing it against the wall earlier. We had a catch with it."

She called the oobleck a neo-Newtonian fluid that also has the properties of a solid.

Students were surprised that

they were able to walk across the box, approximately five feet long, without sinking in. The adults sank a little bit, but the goop still maintained its supportive character.

While some students volunteered to take the walk, others served as observers, taking notes

that were then applied to an assignment to write about the science project.

After one group completed its time in the oobleck room, another would enter. Then the prior one would head to the writing lab for that part of the lesson. **WL**



Teacher Sarah Worley delighted the students by dancing in the oobleck.

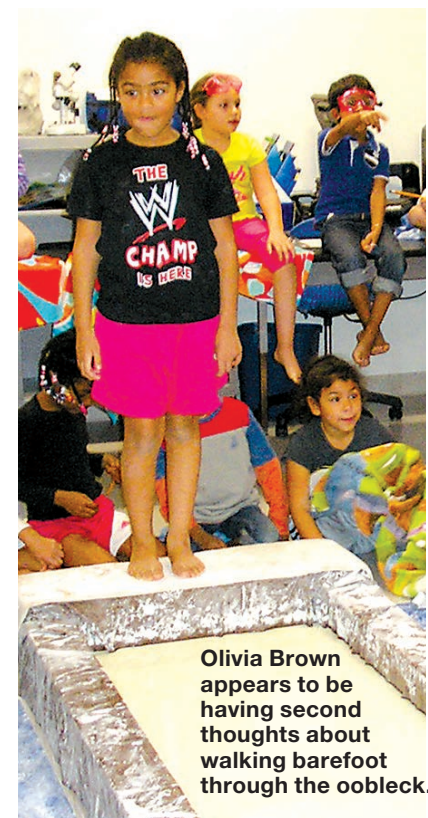
photos by Mark Jahne



Faith Scott sticks her toes into the substance to get a better feel of it.



Dezya Monts takes a walk across the oobleck box at the CREC Discovery Academy.



Olivia Brown appears to be having second thoughts about walking barefoot through the oobleck.

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LIFE *in the classroom*

It's the kind of day that makes you say 'wow'

by Mark Jahne
Editor

There's a new kind of energy being applied at Silas Deane Middle School. Early returns suggest that students and teachers alike are finding it to be a positive experience.

When new Principal Susan Czapla kicked off the 2015-16 academic year Aug. 31, she told her faculty that she wanted to create some special theme days that would make the students say "wow" and fill them with enthusiasm for education.

A meeting room in the main office was turned into a planning and brainstorming center – and WOW Days were born. The first one, held opening day, celebrated being part of a team. Students spent the day in activities and events that focused on team building and responsibility. Teachers dressed in costume and students were greeted with pom-poms and loud music.

The second WOW Day was held Nov. 25. After reviewing SBAC test scores and in-house assessment of data at a faculty meeting, staff members identified a number of areas that could use extra focus and opportunities for enrichment.

Teachers designed lessons that aligned to these areas, and activities were connected to initiatives such as scientific inquiry, civic engagement, problem solving, test-taking strategies, finding evidence to support ideas in writing, listening skills and arts appreciation.

Throughout the building, stu-

dents could be seen playing academic games, using technology to record their answers, designing materials, listening to music and much more.

Eighth-grade science teacher Tom McLoughlin stood on a stool and dropped a paper and a book, with students recording the action using stop-motion technology. Students then conducted their own experiments with tennis balls, books, Ping-Pong balls and other items to see how air resistance interacts with gravity.

Teachers who are part of the Indigo Team coordinated their activities around a common theme of food waste and trash. They watched "Just Eat It," a documentary about people who only ate "rescued" food. Students read articles and worked in small groups to come up with ideas for how they could tackle food waste at school and at home.

Math teachers used game formats to practice answering multiple choice questions, problem solving, equation scavenger hunts, and error analysis activities. Social studies teachers had students create surveys and administer them, then create charts and graphs to document their results.

Students practiced listening skills in world language classes, listening to authentic cultural music and filling in the missing words.

The third WOW Day was held Dec. 23, the final day of school before the holiday break. The activities designed for this day once again focused upon team building and community. Students had multiple opportunities to work collabo-

EDUCATION

ratively on problem solving, identifying essential evidence and listening for key elements.

"If we as a school promote these targets, it will lead to student success," Czapla said. "This year I'm letting them [teachers] drive it."

Also playing a key role is Colleen Harmon, Silas Deane reading consultant and literacy coach. She spoke about the listening part of the day's focus while visiting different classrooms and activities.

"The kids need to identify and pull out key data while they're listening," Harmon said. "Students need to take a larger problem and create a strategy to accomplish it."

One seventh-grade classroom was getting a lesson on writing by listening to the popular holiday tune "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch." The teacher instructed them to pay particular attention to the many different ways the lyrics described Grinch as a bad person.

After the song, they were given a writing assignment, with encouragement to do the same as the lyricist.

Seventh-grade boys in another classroom were using the popular Madden football video game to learn about such scientific

principles as force, arc, motion and angle. Another classroom found students listening to holiday songs in Spanish and playing a bingo game to test their knowledge after learning about the world's major religions and cultures.

Students in a math classroom joined in groups of two or three to tackle problem-solving activities. A social studies classroom was playing a TV-style game show to test their recently learned knowledge. Students worked in groups to see who could answer the questions in the fastest and most accurate manner.

Pictionary using science words was another activity. Interactive technology was heavily in use in most classrooms, including iPads and Chromebooks. The auditorium played host to the annual winter concert that same day.

Czapla, who came to town after serving seven years as assistant principal at South Windsor High School, was thrilled with all of the energy and excitement in the building. She said the WOW Days have already evolved.

"It's taking a different edge on education. Our kids are going to leave here excited today and ready to come back," she said. **WL**



Colleen Harmon, the reading consultant and literacy coach at Silas Deane Middle School, checks in with Michael Sargis in his math class.

photo by Mark Jahne

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EDUCATION

WHS Choralaires spread musical joy

The Wethersfield High School Choralaires performed Dec. 3 at The Villager at Avery Heights, a senior living community in Hartford. It was the first of more than 15 performances scheduled over the holiday season.



The Choralaires sang in the dining room at Avery Heights.



Sophie Fortunato sang a solo during the opening song.

Director Scott Rioux has been bringing the group to sing at Avery Heights for the past seven years.

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Making the grades at Silas Deane

The following students were named to the honor roll for the first trimester at Silas Deane Middle School.

Grade 7

General Honors

Thomas Aglieco, Jahna Agolli, Chase Allis, Adelyne Andino, Dana Andrews, Crystalee Arroyo, David Barajas, Nadia Baroni, Spencer Bartone, Briana Blanco, Lynn Blot, Audrey Buccheri, Dominic Butler, Salvatore Calafiore, Alejandro Caldas, Anthony Carbo, Christopher Cicco, Amanda Coelho, Elisa Correa-Rosa, Danny Cruz, Alecia Dicenso, Matthew DiLeva, Dimitrios Dimisianos, Darnell Ellison, Kyle Esoian, Kate Fote, Andrew Gardon, Faith Giannini, Gabriella Gulino, Charles Hayes, Isabella Heinzmann, Erik Huffman, Sally Jorge and Nathan Kitson.

Also, Dylan Knapp, Samuel Logan, Max Luna, Aaron Maher, Corey Malicki, Brendan Martin, Ninell Mnatsakanian, Francesco Moline, Sean Moquin, Ethan Moreschi, Paige Muscillo, Zeynab Najim, Rayne Nickerson, Marcus Nieves, John O'Leary, Michael Oliver, Semir Osmanovic, Matthew Patkoske, Daniel Pellegrino, Sequoia Perryman, Christopher Pinchera, Sam Poku, Joseph Raposo, Aloysius Rebeiro, Eron Rexhepi, Ethan Rocheleau, Christian Rodriguez, Patricia Rodriguez, Rolando Rodriguez, Amelia Rokes, Alanis Rosario and Alijah Ruocco-Smith.

Also, Julius Sanchez, Giancarlo Santapaola, Isaiah Santiago, Isabella Sanzo, Michael Sargis, Morgan Sargis, Daniel Scheuermann, Robert Schiavone, Adam Schlapfer, Michael Schneider, Genna Sharp, Quinn Shive, Evan Sipala, Jonathan Skowronek, Janelle Stefanski, Krysta Szymecki, Olivia Szymecki, Nicholas Thompson, Matthew Tine, Jenna Toce, Joyce Torres, Vasilios Tsipouras, Oscar Velasco, Amra Velic, Edward Wadsworth, Odin Wunder, Azzan Yancey and Alessandro Zabalza.

Grade 7

High Honors

Taylor Adduci, Gabriella Amoddio, Kate Anzidei, Meghan Appel, Ali Assi, Kevin Avery, Christian Bahouth, Joseph Balut,

Erin Bankowski, Camille Barone, Kyle Beasley, Enea Beda, Asmita Bhattarai, Michael Bielak, Ava Bielenda, Michael Bobin, Isabella Bonvisuto, Jacob Bradley, Jennifer Breglio, Sydney Budaj, Juliana Buonopane, Stephen Byczko, Adriana Cabrera, Lucas Cardoso, Lilliana Cartiera, Morgan Cathcart, Aaron Cholewa, Kendall Cholewa, Erica Christie, Isabella Contreras, Evan Coppa, Bryce Cox, Alexandria D'Onofrio, James Darby, Richard Darrell, Madeleine Day, Mia Destefani, Sarah Detrick, Mehmedina Duric, Owen Gagne, Gianna Garro, Hadden Gaunt and Hannah Gebhardt.

Also, Alexander Ginter, Haylie Gomez, Charles Gray, Meghan Gregorski, Kate Griffin, Aaron Guay, Lejla Guster, Declan Hallinan, Eliza Harris, Anna Hart, John Hart, Noah Haskins, Erica Hertle, Kennedy Hill, Jonathan Hubschmitt, Tiago Huynh, Elma Huzejrovic, Macy Jackson, Rian Jackson, Sierra Judson, Madison King, Annie Klementon, Emma Klementon, Jacob Kozlowski, Haley Krawczyk, Andrew Labbe, Luke Latina, Gracie Leahy, John Lisella and Alexandra Lombardo.

Also, Nathan Malicki, Adriana Mantilla, Admir Masic, Chase Millen, Vincent Milluzzo, Alison Monroe, Alexa Morrissey, Carrie Nguyen, Camila Nobre, Anis Nurkic, Hannah Ocasio, Ariana Padilla, Dimple Patel, Shiv Patel, Lillian Peak, Owen Pearce, Lauren Peruta, Shelly Pettengill, Lindsey Pia, Julia Pitchell, Kayla Platania, Brian Puglielli, Ivan Ren, Elizabeth Rich, Madison Righi, Natali Rios, Amanda Roeder, Veronica Rondinelli, Kaitlin Ryan, Audra Saladin and Autumn Sankofa.

Also, Gino Santilli, Ava Sargent, Giuliana Serrao, Ethan Sitler, Ty Slesinski, Kathleen Sullivan, Isabella Taverney, Olivia Thompson, Franco Tomaino, Clare Tonucci, Lorien Touponse, Hayley Troy, Amaya Turcotte, Adrianna Uccello, Bhakti Vansadia, Ana Villagra, Gabriela Villagra, Victoria Villagra, Taylor Wallowitz, Julia Ward, Devon Wheelchel, Xavier White, Riley Wilhelm, Emily Wolf, Nazanin Zaer, Ella Zagaja, Brendan Zaleski, Zachary Zurzola and Natalie Zwick.

Grade 8

General Honors

Sarmin Alikavazovic, Danielle Alvarenga, Alexander Amado, Zachary Amado, Lucas Amoroso-Whittles, Taylor Ayers, Sarita Bishop, Madison Burbank, Jacob Buser, Joseph Buysse, Riley Carlson, Andrew Cascio, Michaela Collins, Amanda Colon, Robert Cook, Arup Das, Haley Dellafera, Eric Denz, Andrew Desrochers, Abigail Dupont, Michael Fanelli, Kassandra Felipe-Vazquez, Brendan Flynn, Nafeeza Gafoor, Brianna Garcia, Antonio Garro, Francesco Gionfriddo, Nicole Gwynn, Hailey Hodsen, Jade Iaco, Alexa Indomenico and Daniel Jimenez.

Also, Mia Jones, Kyliegh Joyce, Abigail Keane, Mikyle Kegel, Ellie Kieselback, Hayden LaBella, Andrea Martinez, Taylor McGeachy, Paige Melillo, Shanyia Menns, Robert Misseri, Kieran Moller, Sevda Najim, Caitlin Nardella, John Orsini, Janelly Perez, Serf Piedrasanta, Damira Rahmic, Justin Rai, Isabella Rende, Samantha Ritter, Jacob Rivera, Ryan Salemi, Ryan Santiago, Isaac Santos, Taylor Sapere, Conor Senk, John Shamo, Nicholas Silva, Abigail Slemmer, Matthew Stearns, Adriana Szkirka, Joesill Torres, Tyren Watt and Dylan Zuerblis.

Grade 8

High Honors

Arden Adamo, Alexis Almada, Basel Altows, Kyle Anderson, Bryce Arnold, Leah Ayers, Nicholas Babineau, Matthew Bagdasarian, Hailey Baranowski, Owen Barnett, Julia Baroni, Samantha Bassell, Christina Bean, Sarah Bello, Ryan Berasi, Kaitlynn Bertucio, Dhanraj Bhoj, Max Bongiovanni, Dominic Bosco, Brianna Boucher, Sydney Bowers, Sydney Breard, Stephanie Breglio, Katherine Bridges, Gaelen Brodeur, Erin Brush, Brandon Bukowski, Justin Burchell, Alexander Buyak, Krisztina Buzas, Stefania Calafiore, Amanda Carmel, Sarah Carmel, Joseph Cassineri, Citlalli Chavez-Aguilar, Rachel Cloutier, Patrick Codeanne and Joseph Coleman.

Also, Kayla Condon, Grace Conneely, Serena Console, Tiffany Cope, Gianna Cormier, Isabella Costa, Kelsey Crandall, Emma Daly,

Paige DiCiccio, Fiona Dinneen, Sean Donahue, Jessica Driscoll, Justin Dumdum, Michael Dunn, Kyle Edman, Nathaniel Estifanos, Emily Fazzina, Tatyanna Feliciano, Kaitlyn Fischer, Jessica Garcia, Samuel Garcia, Gabriel Gomes, Rachel Gopaul, Jillian Gray, Michelle Guerard, Edina Hamidovic, Jack Healy, Mia Healy, Christopher Heavren, Jordan Hickey, Alison Ho, Sydney Hock, Kristina Hoda, Braedon Hook, Mariela Interian, Michael Irace and Neil Jitlall.

Also, Alden Johnson, Andre Jorge, Clarence Jubac, Dylan Kalicharan, Nikolas Kalicharan, Max Karkos, Megan Kelleher, Alice Kelly, Genevieve Kirsche, Zoe Kleeblatt, Caroline Klinger, Rei Koni, Ryan Koplin, Zerina Korkutovic, Frederick Krol, Jack Kurtz, Aaron Ky, Cameron Ky, Kort Lambrecht, Hayden Laske, Kiara Lazu, Mary LeConche, Lillian Lee, Abigail Lemaire, Lauren Lesser, Matthew Lipka, Nathan Loura, James Luiz, Cristina Lynch, Grace Mackiewicz, Charlotte Magel, Audrey Mainville, Elizabeth Malicki and Abigail Malizia.

Also, Michael Malizia, William Malizia, Yulduz Mamedova, Thais Mantilla, Nicholas McGrath, Evan McNeice, Meaghan Merchant, Joseph Meredith, Chase Miller, Ava Minichino, Olivia Morais, Tam Nguyen, Nicole Nocida, Clarissa Nock, Kerianne O'Brien, Morgan O'Donnell, Samuel Odell, Bethany Ostergren, Connor Pace, Katerina Pantaleo, Cameron Partridge, Hemil Patel, Mya Pellegrino, Maria Pena, Gabriel Perdomo, Nikos Petropoulos and Trevor Pieciewicz.,

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EDUCATION

Honored for their academic prowess

The following students were named to the honor roll for the first quarter at Wethersfield High School.

High Honors

Grade 9

Zoe Adams, Jordan Adduci, Aiden Ademi, Hope Allen, Allison Appel, Allison Ayers, Kate Ayers, Alec Capasso, Natalie Casertano, Kayla Cruz, Katharine Edwards, Auna Foster, Abigail Francis, Maya Gainty, Kathryn Galusha, Katherine Ginter, Katelyn Glendon, Sarah Gordon, Lucyne Grigorian, Jeremy Halla, Liam Harrington, Shannon Hattie, Holden Hoon, Julia Hughes, Matthew Iallonardo, Luke Johnson, Jared Kauffman, Kavi Khadar, Gabrielle Klementon, Agron Konjusha, Anthony Ky, Cassandra Landry, Yasmin Lazu, Jacob Lepore, Leah Lin, Joshua Malizia, Emily McKenna, Tanya Messenger, Anthony Milluzzo, Emma Moore, Kenan Mujic, Nicole Murphy, Lejla Muskic, Erin Nargi, Daniel Parker, Madison Patkoske, Alyssa Pearce, Marina Pernoi, Alyssa Prosperi, Emily Raffalo, Rebecca Rivera, Jenna Sanzo, Isabella Scandura, Dimitri Shaposhnikov, Katherine Stearley, Kaitlyn Swoverland, Ariana Tessier, Elizabeth Veilleux, Angelica Velez, Connor Wallowitz, Owen Weaver, Haley Whelchel, Mei Xue, Christina Yanaros, Sophia Zagaja and Ryan Zwick.

Grade 10

Elena Anderson, Grant Anderson, Emma Augustine, Zachary Bonfiglio, AnnaJane Brown, Eric Bucknam, Rebecca Buonopane, Ling Chi, Isabel Correa, Stephanie DeCarli, Joseph DiCioccio, Alexandra Dizes, Thomas Dowd, Jacob Driscoll, Nathan Everett, Jessica Garofalo, Lily Gaunt, Amanda

Gilbert, Tyler Gomes, Brian Heavren, Nathan Hrdy, Christian Karkos, Devon Kleeblatt, Ethan Krol, Samuel Lemaire, Juliana Mandile, Malena Mandile, Heather Mayo, Maria Moldovan, Maya Mulholland, Atlee Myers, James O'Connor, Anna O'Neil, Leah Ostergren, Micaela Pereyra, Chelsea Pinchera, Sara Puglielli, Jane Rumley, Jason Sharp, Tessa Slesinski, Will Stabach, Maura Stewart, Tyler Stout, James Sullivan, Kaleigh Sullivan, Wing Sze, Alexandra Talarczyk, Megan Tonucci, Amanda Tougas, Triniti White, Rachel Wilson and Karolina Wlaz.

Grade 11

Kady Allen, Lily Bello, Anthony Berry, Vincenzo Bongiovanni, Jack Breton, Jeana Bruno, Chianna Calafiore, Audrey Coleman, Caroline Coyne, Molly Desrochers, Lindsey Gordon, Kaitlyn Irace, Idalis Irizarry, Matthew Jablonka, Kathleen Kerekes, Kelly Lamo, Lynne Landers, Marissa Landry, Jordan Laske, Sarah Lawler, Kerry Lindquist, Justin Michaud, Amiel Monasterial, Emma Peak, Brianna Platania, Zana Preniqi, Madison Raposo, Samantha Rosa, Andrew Sanzaro, Alyssa Schroll, Nora Serrao, Hsa Shee, Jessica Sitler, Jacklyn Snide, Sarina Tucker, Olivia Tyler, Samantha Urban, Casey Urso, Ricardo Velez, Payton Viner, Jocelyn Wilcox and Yiqian Zhuo.

Grade 12

Alicia Ademi, Kris Agolli, Lauren Arienza, Claudia Barone, Alexander Bartis, Briley Bartone, Mia Bell, Valentina Birritta, Cassidy Bourassa, Andrea Bucknam, Micah Burnett, Dilan Cabral, Lauren Cardenas, Rachel Caruk, Alexandria Casertano, Lillian Ciarletto, Matthew Cloutier, Leiah Cutkomp, David Dale, Abigail Davis,

Christina DeAngelo, Emma Detrick, Zoe Dizenzo, Carter Dizes, Stephanie Emmanuel, Kristina Ercolani, Christina Faienza, Rosmarie Faienza, Margaret Fitzpatrick, Katherine Flynn, Sophie Fortunato, Pierre Franklin, Kacey Friedman, Taylor Galusha, Dareca Garib, Taylor Garrey, Sawyer Gaunt, Max Gentino, Ian Gingrave, Thomas Griffin, Peter Hahn, Destini Hall, Edin Hamidovic, Rebecca Hine, Joshua Hinoestroza, Megan Hoisl, Andrew Hrdy, Alexis Irizarry, Roxanne Jacobs, Jacob Johnson, Taylor Jones, Redona Karamanaj, Hazim Korkutovic, Katherine Lamberti, Amanda Lamore, Benjamin Lepo, Feng Lin, Brendan Livingston, Caroline Logozzo, Adam Lynch, Christopher Manousos, Julia Martin, Anna Mayo, Matthew McAlister, Sydney Mercier, Amadea Mitusina, Abigale Monasterial, Arva Nerenxa, Connie Nguyen, Andrew Nicki, Ansley Nix, Madelyn O'Connor, Hailey Olesen, Carissa Peckrul, Kaeleigh Rakus, Gabriela Rizzo-Velez, Gina Santapaola, Venezia Santoro, Jessie Sanzo, Daniel Schroeder, Taylor Scutari, Brianna Shive, Jacob Skowronek, James Slayton, Eric Stefano, Colin Stewart, Meaghan Szilagyi, Alyssa Tonucci, Andrew Turgeon, Emma Walsh, Allison Weed, Matthew Wilson, Karol Wroblewski and Michelle Yanaros.

Honors

Grade 9

Mark Accarpio, Matthew Accarpio, Fritz Aguiar, Ajla Ahmetovic, Vanessa Ajodhi, Dino Alihodzic, Grace Amoruso, Chase Anderson-Birdsall, Ashley Anduha, Alec Arnold, Mark Bagdasarian, Sedina Begic, Justin Biraci, Jack Blaisdell, Monica Bongiovanni, Ajalon Brereton,

Mairead Breton, Joshua Chamberland, Austin Chase, Derek Chmielorz, Alex Chodorowski, Madison Cipolla, Kacia Claffey-Hesseltine, Melanie Cohen, Marissa Colangelo-Deluca, Danielle Colbath, David Colon, Paige Contenta, Evan Copeland, Cameron Corazzo, Johnny Cravero, Amanda DeJesus, Austin DellaFera, Tyler DellaFera, Olivia Destefani, Cenia Diluvio, Matthew Domonkos, Michael Donnelly, Thomas Drake, Brianna Dreger, Afton Dyjak, Craig Elliott, James Errickson, David Garcia, Deandre Garib, Sofia Giarratana, Amayia Giscombe, Anthony Guerrera, Aliza Gul, Zeeshan Haider, Rachel Hall, Nicholas Hetherman, Tea Hima, Luca Isaila, Anna Kallajian, Brian Kanya, Arber Karamanaj, Ivan Kaurin, Megan Keleher, Luke Kelleher, Brooke Kycia, Nathan Labbe, Matthew Laurie, Tatum Lewis-Holcombe, Ricardo Lima, Gavin Lippitt, Emily Litke, Anthony Lopez, Patrick Martin, Sarah Maya, Lauren McAlister, Hannah McGrath, Jacqueline Moquin, Katherine Neilan, Dylan Olesen, Jenesis Ortiz, Sydney Ouellette, Jenna Pare, Sasha Parmanand, Forum Patel, Jake Peckrul, Kelvyn Perez, Chit Po, Mitchell Quadrato, Kevin Rascius, Mark Rich, Wilmer Rivera-Ortiz, Erin Robles, Ryan Rodrigues, Raul Rodriguez, Kelly Scales, Jason Scalora, John Schiavone, Jacob Schlapfer, Caleb Skowronek, Jaedyn Stanescki, Aidan Stec, Mason Sundquist, Alexis Szymecski, Shantall Teran, Liam Tilton, John Tine, Mia Tougas, Adel Turkovic, Micaela Uccello and Shun Wong.

Grade 10

Rachael Amoruso, Thomas Ayers, Madelyn Barone, Sabrina Berry, Shawn Bertucio, Alexander Bielak, Ashley Bilello, Timothy Blaisdell,

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Grade 11

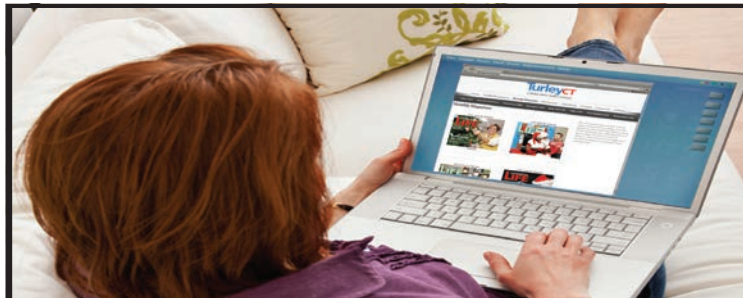
Nicole Arcari, Sean Arcouette, Akif Aydin, Stephanie Ayers, Holly Babineau, Rachel Bahouth, Taylor Bradley, Victoria Brazel, Jeffrey Bridges, Ashley Burkell, Melanie Burns, Anna Cannata, Mariana Carcia, Jared Christensen, Devyn Clark, Van Cleve, Jacob Colbath, Andrew Console, Destiny Cruz, Megan Darrell, Avishek Das, Dylan Dellafera, Hannah Desrochers, Dina DiMarco, Fiona Dunn, Vanessa Faienza, JinTao Feng, Kyle Flynn, Ryan Flynn, Maeve Foley, Dorris Gallari, Monique Gardon, Joseph Gaudet, Griffin Grabowski, Collin Grottke, Kaleigh Hart, Bridget Hattie, Jared Hill, Lauren Hubschmitt, Emily Kallajian, Matthew Keefe-Stefanik, Sloane Kozlowski, Maggie Krawczyk, Amina Kuljancic, Kevin

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Grade 12

Sara Aguilar, Natalie Albrecht, Madison Albright, Mario Arcata, Christopher Ayers, Nicholas Bialka, Gabrielle Bielak, Zachary Birdsall, Summer Budaj, Matthew Burwell, Elizabeth Byrne, Julian Campbell, Veronica Catricala, Matthew Colangelo, Zachary Confalone, Kevin

Davoren, Alyssa DiFiore, Gloria Dishnica, Veronika Dubil, David Edwards, Vincent Fazio, Katerina Ficara, Harris Gallari, Emily Gjuzi-Pantaleon, Lewis Glynn, Dante Goddard, Aleysia Green, Daniel Griffin, Alexis Gwynn, Fatima Haider, Joshua Halla, William Hart, Natalie Heavren, Jacob Hickey, Nick Huynh, Nicholas Kallajian, Michael Kelly, Kyle Klavins, Tate Knapp, Leonie Koellmer, Evan Krol, Alan Ky, Rachel Llorens, Barbara Lombardo, Jessica MacLean, Jack Malizia, Toryn Malone, Melissa Matarazzo, Parker Maulucci, Paulina Migliorati, Emily Moody, Michael Motuzick, Daniel O'Brien, Mariana Oliveira, Hayley Orkins, Kishan Patel, Ariana Persson, Navarre Pratt, Daniel Purinton, Katharine Reilly, Charles Renaud, Jordan Rivera, Jose Rivera, Delia Rondinelli, Adriana Rotondo, Nasilda Sadik, Cruz, Santa, Gabriella Scacca, John Schmid, Christopher Shimwell, Marin Sisson, Diana Sitnik, Devon Smith, Joshua Smith, Troy Stegman, Maura Stickley, Luke Surawski, Michael Trinh, Colin Tyler, Valentina Valencia, Kemal Velic, Gianmarco Venditti, Megan Ward, Sara Wasserman, Eric Wright and Paul Zocco. **WL**



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Dr. Thomas Gworek to retire

Veteran dentist has many interests beyond teeth

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Dentistry just might have been the perfect career choice for Dr. Thomas Gworek.

"I always liked the sciences in high school. I loved working with my hands. I was a big model builder," recalled Gworek, who moved to town from Hartford when he was 3 years old.

His own dentist, the late Dr. Phil Sehl, encouraged him to explore the field.

"He said, 'Gee, if you like science and you like to work with your hands, this might be something to consider.' He was always in his office listening to the Red Sox games, surrounded by pretty hygienists, and I thought it was a pretty good deal," Gworek said with a smile.

After attending Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, he knew he wanted to come back to Connecticut to practice.

"I looked at various towns. Surprisingly, Wethersfield seemed to have not had a new dentist in a while, more than other towns I looked at," he said.

"This house [on Wolcott Hill Road] was available. It was so centrally located with schools all around it. I thought it would be a great place to start a practice. I probably, at that time, thought I would start here and move into an office building," he added.

He served as a dentist in the Navy for two years, opening his private practice in town in 1959. Originally, he used his home's sunporch as a waiting room, with the office in half of the home's living and dining rooms. As the practice

expanded, he needed more room.

"We built this little bungalow. In those days, it was the perfect thing. It worked out very well," he said.

Now, with more than 50 years in the business, Gworek has decided to retire. He stopped accepting new patients about 15 years ago and will close the practice at the end of April.

"It's a difficult decision, even though you like to think you're not slowing down," said Gworek, who wants to retire "before my hands begin to shake and people say, 'Why is he hanging around so long?'"

He has a lot of memories in those years of practice.

"This story is kind of cute. I'd been in practice for a very short time. One Saturday morning a young man came in the waiting room with a really forlorn look on his face," Gworek recalled.

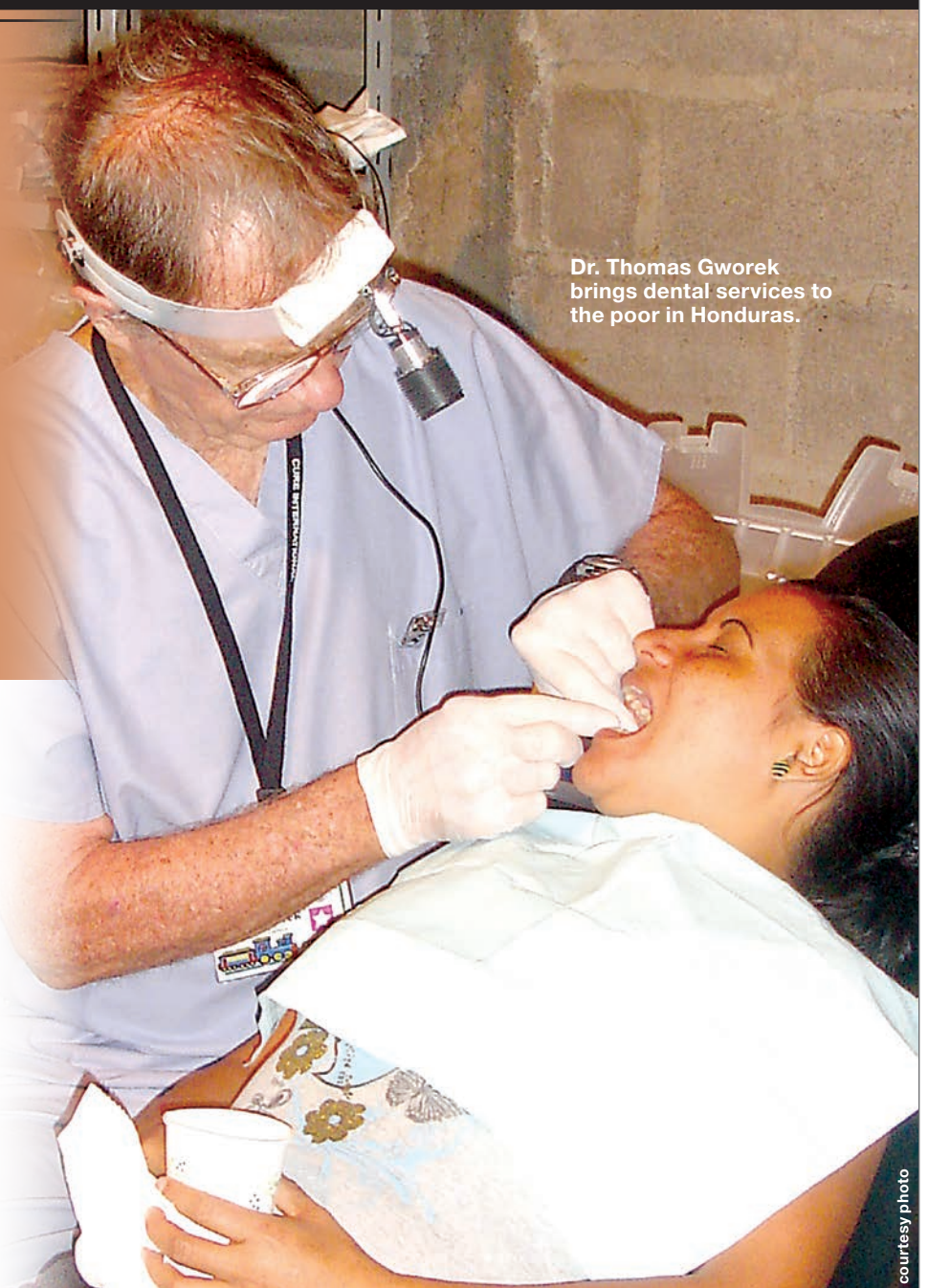
The patient had broken his partial, which included his front teeth. Gworek said he'd take an impression and have it back to him on Tuesday.

"He said, 'The only problem is I'm getting married at 1 o'clock.' I was able to fix it in an hour, to rig up something. He's been a patient since," Gworek said.

Al Powers is another long-time patient; he estimates he's been going to Gworek for about 53 years.

"It started when I was in the police department. I had gotten into a situation on the midnight shift and half of my tooth split. In the morning around 8 o'clock – I didn't know any dentists at the time – I called his number. He said, 'Come right up.'"

"Fortunately, he was able to save my tooth. That started the relationship. He's not only a good doctor, but



Dr. Thomas Gworek brings dental services to the poor in Honduras.

courtesy photo

a good friend," Powers said.

"That's when he was operating almost in his living room. Over the years, I've had a few mishaps, nothing major; I'm 78 years old and I still have my teeth.

"Any time I'd have a problem, I'd call and he'd say, 'Come right up.' Recently, I had a problem with a toothache. I called him. He said, 'Come right up.' Within a half an hour, I did."

Powers added that Gworek always took the time to answer questions.

"He's a good man," Powers said. "A lot of people are going to miss him as a dentist."

Gworek talked about the number of changes in the way that dentistry is practiced.

"Technologically, there have been great changes in not only the equipment used to prepare teeth and the filling material. It used to be

white for front teeth and silver for back teeth. Now there are dozens of different materials," Gworek said.

"Then, in the way people practice. It used to be pretty much a one-man office with a couple of hygienists and a receptionist. Now people are going into larger offices with four or five men and two or three specialists. It's sort of like a supermarket in a way, where patients can go and get all their treatment in one office."

While Gworek considered expanding, he remained a solo practitioner throughout his career.

"When I was busy enough to really be able to expand and take in an associate, I decided the change just wasn't worth the investment and I'm happy I did that. This has been a very nice way to practice," he said.

"I'm helping people that are in pain. That is always a good feeling. Patients do come in and sometimes

they've been up all night, and when you can make them feel better, that really makes you feel good."

Gworek has also put his skills to use to help the less fortunate, volunteering in Honduras through Corpus Christi Church. He hesitated at first, because he was having back problems, but his wife encouraged him to go.

"I didn't know if I could do it. Gloria finally said, 'You should try it; do it once.' We did it once, things went fine. I enjoyed it so much, I did it for eight or nine years. The only reason we stopped was there was so much violence in some of the towns we stayed in that the parent company stopped sending people down there," Gworek said.

"It was a challenge I enjoyed. Maybe I wasn't a Boy Scout long enough, but I liked setting up in a foreign environment. [At first] I just did extractions and Gloria held a flashlight so I could see what I was doing," he recalled.

"We acquired field equipment and did a lot of fillings, restorative work. Every year it was the same

crew. We got to be very friendly with them and their families. That was a very nice part of it."

Through the years, various family members would accompany him. The last year he was down there, he had a less-than-perfect experience, ending up in the hospital. Still, it was worth it.

Patients do come in and sometimes they've been up all night, and when you can make them feel better, that really makes you feel good."

— Dr. Thomas Gworek

"Seeing people that had abscess teeth and had no opportunity to see a dentist come in and we could relieve their suffering," he said.

"I remember one gentleman who could hardly speak English. He shook my hand. It was like shaking hands with a baseball glove. He said,

'God bless you for helping the poor.' We'd [see] 100 people lined up at 7 in the morning in the rain waiting for treatment."

When the group stopped going to Honduras, Gworek wanted to continue helping those in need.

"We called a couple of homeless shelters in Hartford and set up a

clinic," he said.

Clinics were established at South Park Inn and Immaculate Conception Shelter. In addition to Gworek and his wife, Rob Gingris of Wethersfield and Dr. Mary Pergiovanni, a dentist in Rocky Hill, volunteered their time.

"We go one day a month to two different clinics and offer free care there using the same equipment and field techniques [as in Honduras]. I think that was a nice spinoff from that," Gworek said.

His interests expand far beyond dentistry. He served on the Board of Education for seven years in the 1970s.

"It was a wonderful experience. I think everyone should run for office once, just to see how the system works. I'd never consider myself a politician, but the experience was a very good experience," he said.

He also enjoys writing and has been published in the Connecticut State Dental Association Journal and some general interest publications. He's on the board of the Wethersfield Historical Society, an organization in which his wife is also active.

"I find that a worthwhile endeavor. They do a lot of nice educational things, besides keeping records for future generations," he noted.

He enjoys outdoor life as well.

"I like to sail and I have a sail-

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Pull out this Keane Foundation 2016 Winter

FEBRUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER



KEANE FOUNDATION
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2016 Winter/Spring Upcoming Events

FREE Saturday Basketball

January 9, 16, 23, 30

February 6, 20, 27

March 5, 12, 19 & April 2

Grades K-3 10:30 am - 12 noon

Grades 4-6 12:30 - 2 pm

Grades 7+8 2 - 3:30 pm

9/11 Memorial Sports Center

Keane on Kids

After School Programs

February 1- March 15, 2016

March 28 - May 10, 2016

See Town of Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Brochure

<http://wethersfieldct.com/filestorage/398/422/Rec-Brochure-Winter-Spring-2016.pdf>

for Sign up or www.keanefoundation.org for more information

Kids Vacation Day

9/11 Memorial Sports Center

Call Community Center office to reserve your space 860-721-2950

Wednesday of April Vacation Week

April 13, 2016

UNICO/KEANE FOUNDATION ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, May 16, 2016
Wethersfield Country Club

ANNUAL Keane Foundation 5K Run/Walk

Stillman Field (Garden Street near Hanmer School)

June 5, 2016

Family Picnic of Remembrance of 9/11

September 11, 2016

Broad Street Green, 5-7 pm

Bring your own Picnic Supper

COVE SIDE CARNIVAL Cove Park Wethersfield

October 14, 15, 16, 2016

Running Club Spring 2015



The 3rd Annual Keane Foundation Running Club will return to all 5 Wethersfield Elementary Schools for children in Grades 3-6 starting in April. The program teaches children how to develop their endurance, set goals, and promote self-esteem. Last year children of all running abilities progressed from their current level to completing a 5K (3.1 miles).



June 5K

Keane Foundation 5K on June 5th. Set a personal goal, and build endurance and self esteem while participating (run, jog or walk) in a 5K. The registration forms will be distributed in early May through the schools, watch for it in the backpacks. Also available at the Recreation Offices at Town Hall or at the Community Center. See you all at the 5K!

A Message from the Keane Foundation

Another great year for the Keane Foundation! The recent Carnival was a big hit despite some cold days and even a few snowflakes! Our other Fundraisers including Christmas season Luminaria sales, the Annual 5K in June, and the UNICO/Keane Foundation Golf Tournament were all successful this year as well. Despite continued economic sluggishness, the Keane Foundation has been fortunate in 2015 to have received directed donations through the United Way, as well as continued individual donations.

This year we funded Keane Foundation After School Programs, Vacation Day Programs, Elementary School Running Clubs, Media Center staff at the Middle School, and Saturday Open Gym at the 9/11 Memorial Sports Center. So it has been a very busy year!

The Keane Foundation has become an important part of the Wethersfield culture. Many times we are contacted to be a part of something exciting in the community, as a partner, a provider of information, funds, or expertise.

As announced last year we have begun distributing grants to organizations that mirror our Mission **(to support, sustain, and develop programs for the community that will offer sports, fitness, educational and recreational programs)**. Some recipients in 2015 have been Hanmer, Highcrest, Webb and Charles Wright Elementary Schools for programs such as Hartford Stage After School Drama, Yoga 4 Classrooms, and after School Enrichment programs; Wethersfield High School Pieces Literary Magazine; the Silas Deane Middle School After School Intramural Program; the Senior Center Yoga Program; the Creative Arts Council and Wethersfield Food Bank.

The Keane Foundation also received a \$25,000

Grant from VOYA (Science, Technology, and Art) on science programs. This will connect with the school for VOYA's core.

Going forward, the School Program makes economic sense even more students. Each school will have a program. of their students as Keane Foundation the target goal. Programs. So it

The 9/11 Memorial to be essential. In Basketball, Night Hang On. Wethersfield Town Center for those available to receive parties or other

As in the past, continues to support programs and



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Consider giving a portion of your
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October 14, 15

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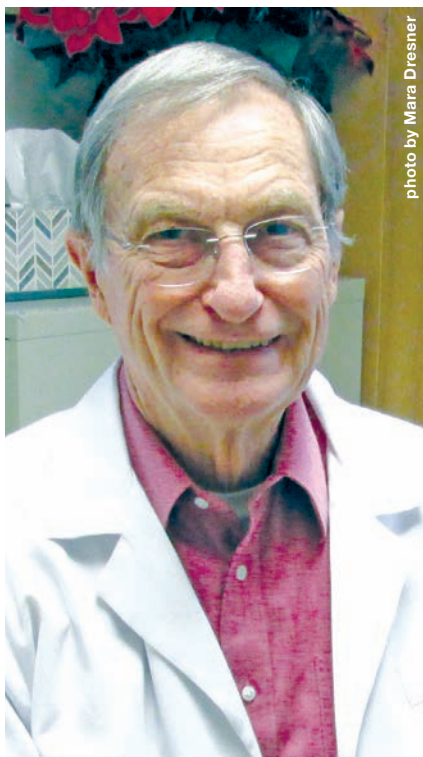


photo by Mara Dresner

Dr. Thomas Gworek is retiring from his dental practice at the end of April. He's been in practice for more than 50 years.

boat which I haven't been able to spend much time on. I hope to do more of that," he said.

"My other hobby, and I've been doing it for 40 years, is I love to photograph wildflowers and catalogue them. I identify them and label them and put them in a book. I think I'll do more hiking and that sort of thing."

You might also find him volunteering as a docent at the New Britain Museum of American Art, which he's been doing for about a decade.

"I started that because Gloria said I really should think about something for when I retire. Although I'm not an artist, I love art. The only thing is I forgot to retire, so I'm doing both. I plan on keeping that up," Gworek said.

He serves on the museum's long-term planning and acquisitions and loans committees.

Not all of his fellow docents realized he was still working. Pat Hickox has been a docent at the museum for 15 years and remembered asking Gworek why he'd have to run out when they had daytime meetings.

"I didn't even know he was a dentist for a long time," she said

with a laugh.

"His sense of humor and down-to-earth kind of approach to life is refreshing," added Hickox, who is a retired nurse practitioner in pediatrics.

The two worked on an art elective program where students from the University of Connecticut Medical School would visit NBMAA and work with the docents.

"What do you see? What makes you say that? What more can you find? It would help them make observations and hone their observations skills," she said.

"It was very successful, but then UConn made other arrangements. It was quite eye-opening to us and I think students benefited, too."

Hickox said Gworek can easily relate to patrons of all ages.

"He's a great docent with kids and adults. He seems to be able to reach them on a level that's participatory and interactive. It's not a lecture," she said.

"He's a gentle giant. He's so tall. I'm about five-four-and-a-half, so whenever I'm standing next to him,

I'm always looking up to him.

"He's a very tall person and yet he can bring himself down to the level of kids, not necessarily kneeling down or talking down. He just has a smile and a twinkle in his eye that is very endearing."

Despite his busy schedule, Gworek has also been making time for one more thing – a college degree.

"When I went to college, I was a scholarship student. My father was a blue-collar worker. I really took a load of subjects, so I went to dental school after two years of college. I always thought I wanted to get my degree," said Gworek, who is attending Wesleyan University.

He first considered earning a bachelor's degree.

"They thought that was kind of silly, since I already had a doctorate. Just for fun, I then decided to apply for the master's program," he said. "I really enjoy it. It's really been an eye opener."

Gworek is majoring in social science and expects to graduate next year. **WL**

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People notes



1. Maria Tougas was named a partner at the law firm of Jacobs, Walker, Rice & Barry, LLC, where she specializes in commercial litigation, contract disputes, probate litigation and employment law. She recently argued a race and national origin discrimination case before the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in New York City.

Thomas Betts, Amanda Civitello and **David Marotollo** participate on Kingswood Oxford School's Upper School Mock Trial team.

Kaitlin Gontarz, Vanessa Cunha and **Matthew Ferris** were named to the dean's list at Lasell College.

Francesca Discenza, John Dudley, Michael Foster, Alex Kanya, Kerre Lattanzio, Megan Lowe and **Eliza Wizner** earned first honors for the first quarter at Northwest Catholic High School.

Margaret Bello, Lauren Contenta, Gabriella Fenton and **Megan Kaake** earned second honors. Honorable mention

went to **John Foster** and **Lauren Mogelnicki**.

2. Matthew Marottolo placed first in the Kingswood Oxford Middle School Geography Bee and will now compete in the statewide contest.

Kelly McDonald was named to the dean's list at Providence College.

Mary McKenna was named to the dean's list at Providence College.

John Dudley and **Megan Lowe** were among the 85 Northwest Catholic High School students inducted into the Aquinas Chapter of the National Honor Society.

Teaghan Fallon was named to the dean's list in the Boston University Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.

Jenna Brown was named to the dean's list at Dean College.

Alyssa Santos was inducted into Epsilon Nu chapter of Kappa Delta Pi at Eastern Connecticut State University.



Austin Musson completed a project for the 20th annual Windham Hospital fundraiser. His major is visual arts.

Lee Nichols was named to the dean's list at Bob Jones University.

Alexa Giolito, a student at Eastern Connecticut State University, presented her research at the annual Psychological Science Night.

Morris Borea has joined the law firm of McGivney & Kluger, P.C., as a partner and trial counsel in its Hartford office.

Austin Pallone was named to the dean's list at Coastal Carolina University.

Olivia Hurley and **Chloe Knapp** were named to the dean's list at the University of Vermont.

Danielle Verre completed an internship at the Abington Police Department in Massachusetts. She is a senior at Stonehill College. **WL**

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Business notes



1. Ivana Delmic has joined **Weichert, Realtors – The Zubretsky Group**. Originally from Wethersfield, she is a member of the Greater Hartford Association of Realtors and the National Association of Realtors.

2. Sales Associate Rita Franceski has joined **Weichert, Realtors – The Zubretsky Group**. She is working with property buyers and sellers in West Hartford, Newington and Wethersfield.

The International Institute of Cosmetology recently celebrated the graduation of 100 students. The event featured a luncheon, fashion shows, awards presentations, and a commencement address delivered by internationally known reality televi-



sion star Tabatha Coffey.

Graduates received their diplomas from Coffey and then each got a picture taken with the star.

Hartford HealthCare at Home appointed Holly Bessoni-Lutz as its new director of hospice and palliative care. Based in its Wethersfield office, Bessoni-Lutz administers, oversees and directs all services of the Hospice/Palliative Care program. Before joining Hartford HealthCare at Home, Bessoni-Lutz was the director of hospice services for Interim HealthCare Hospice and was previously a patient care administrator with VITAS Innovative Hospice Care.

The married couple of Dr. Elizabeth



Holzauer and Dr. Tim Holzauer were voted top dentists by their peers in a recent issue of Connecticut Magazine. Both practice at **Blue Back Dental** in West Hartford. She is a native of Wethersfield.

3. D'Esopo Funeral Chapels in Wethersfield and East Hartford received the Pursuit of Excellence Award once again this year for their commitment to providing the highest standards to the families they serve. This is the 14th consecutive year that they have earned this distinction, placing them in the top 1 percent of funeral homes nationwide. National Funeral Directors Association President Robert Moore, left, presents the award to Janet D'Esopo Klett and Michael Klett.

A holiday gift drive at the **Panera Breads** in the Hartford region, including Wethersfield, enabled Charities of Hope to make the holidays brighter for 50 children served by CT ALIVE. Presents were collected for the Hartford-based organization by Panera customers and employees.

Joel Johnson, managing partner and owner of **Johnson Brunetti Retirement and Investment Specialists**, was recently featured in both Forbes.com and on the cover of Retirement Advisor magazine. Johnson is the author of five books including the Amazon best-seller "The Money Map" and "The 2015 Guide to Maximizing Your Retirement Income." **WL**



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February *calendar*

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29					

2 Weight Loss with Dr. Christine Loudon, 6:30 p.m., registration suggested, Wethersfield Library, 515 Silas Deane Highway, 860-257-2811 or wethersfieldlibrary.org

Time to Talk, 7:30 p.m., Wethersfield Library, also Feb. 9 and 23

6 Take Your Child to the Library Day, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wethersfield Library

8 New Connecticut: The Connecticut Western Reserve, 7 p.m., Keeney Memorial Cultural Center, 200 Main St., \$5 admission, free to members of

the Wethersfield Historical Society, 860-529-7656 or wethersfieldhistory.org

9 Friends of the Wethersfield Library, 7 p.m., Wethersfield Library

12 Valentine's DJ Dance Party, 7-11 p.m., Pitkin Community Center, 30 Greenfield St., wethersfieldchamber.com

13 150 Prospect Coffeehouse, 6:30 p.m., Wethersfield United Methodist Church, 150 Prospect St., 860-614-5158 or tanjam@comcast.net

17 Nutmeg Nibbles, 4 p.m., for grades 2-4, Wethersfield Library

20 Zumba Dance Party, 9-11 a.m., Hanmer School, 50 Francis St., \$15 to support Madres Latinas of Wethersfield, madreslatinaswethersfield@gmail.com

21 UNICO Famous Macaroni Dinner, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Pitkin Community Center

A Concert of Spirituals, 4 p.m., First Church of Christ in Wethersfield, 250 Main St. 860-529-1575

23 GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club, 6 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., Newington, 860-666-4371

Pizza and Pages, 6:30 p.m., for grades 4-6, Wethersfield Library

Library Board, 7 p.m., Wethersfield Library

Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

Events *spotlight*

Valentine's DJ Dance Party
Feb. 12, 7-11 p.m.
*Pitkin Community Center
30 Greenfield St.
wethersfieldchamber.com*
The Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce presents this night of dancing to raise money for its 2016 fire-works fund. Entertainment Unlimited will provide the music and guests are invited to bring their own bottles and snacks. Tickets are \$25 per person and may be obtained by contacting Joe

Marrero at 860-306-1235 or joseph-marrero@bhhsne.com. They can also be purchased on the chamber website.
Zumba Dance Party
Feb. 20, 9-11 a.m.
*Hanmer School
50 Francis St.
madreslatinaswethersfield@gmail.com*
Madres Latinas of Wethersfield presents an opportunity to raise funds while having fun and improving your health. Certified Zumba instructors

will lead this program and there will be raffle prizes available as well. Admission is \$15 (cash only) and one raffle prize. No previous Zumba experience is necessary.

UNICO Famous Macaroni Dinner
Feb. 21, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
*Pitkin Community Center
30 Greenfield St.
860-538-8758 or
josephspinoso@yahoo.com*
This is the 37th year that Wethersfield UNICO has served up a hot winter meal to raise money for its charitable giving mission. The all-volunteer staff will cook and serve a meal of macaroni with homemade sauce and meatballs, salad, garlic bread and ice cream. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$7 for children 12 and under. They can be purchased at the door or from any UNICO member.

Linda Russell & Companie
Feb. 28, 2 p.m.
*Keeney Memorial Cultural Center
200 Main St.
860-529-7656 or
wethersfieldhistory.org*
From the boisterous ballads of the 18th Century to the sentimental melodies of the Victorian age, Linda Russell recreates a lost national treasure. While performing on guitar, mountain and hammered dulcimers, penny whistle and limberjack, her singing illuminates America's heritage through patriotic anthems, broadsides, hymns and dance tunes.
This concert is part of the Kenney Cultural Series produced by the Wethersfield Historical Society. Tickets are \$10 for society members and \$12 for non-members.



Tips for lifelong love

Advice from those married 50 years or more

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Even the best marriage has its occasional bumps and problems, and many experience more serious trials and tribulations. Some couples choose to go their separate ways, but others maintain the commitment they made to one another when they exchanged vows and remain married for 50 years or longer.

Several area couples were asked to share their advice on how to live a happy and fulfilling married life well into their golden years. Here is a sample of what they said.

Angelo and Tani Faenza of West Hartford exchanged vows 54 years ago. They reflected on what it took to get to this point in their lives and still be happy together.

"You have to be patient. You can't fly off the handle. Think before you talk. Don't hold a grudge; forgive," Tani said. "You have to listen to each other."

"You've got to have the intention of making this a lifelong thing and raising kids. You need to talk and sometimes you need to give in," Angelo added. "We have four children and their spouses and we're all very close."

His wife agreed that communication is an important component of a successful marriage. Even though her husband worked late many nights when he was involved in the restaurant business, they always made it a point to talk before bed.

"The longer you're married, the more you depend on that," Angelo said. "We always worked as a team."

"We were equals from the beginning," Tani added. "We never had

male and female roles. We were partners."

No matter how busy, they always made time for each other. The couple met in their early teens and married when he was 20 and she was 19.

Michael and Lucille Rizzo of Wethersfield have 67 years of marriage behind them.

"It's a big responsibility," Michael said.

People should not get married just for the sake of it. They also need to understand that, no matter how much in love they are, they will not always agree, he added.

"One of you has to be smart enough to keep your mouth shut" to avoid arguments, he said with a chuckle.

"It's not a 50-50 proposition. If you each give 75 percent, you're going to make it. It's a two-way street," Lucille said. "After a while, you're so together that you almost become one."

Alois and Clara Weber of West Hartford were married in 1962. They agreed that it is important to work out any differences so that they don't fester and damage the matrimonial bond.

"We get along. Everybody has their ups and downs. Every marriage has a couple of bumps," Alois said.

"You have to work out the bumps," Clara said. "Have patience, talk, don't go to bed mad."

Joyce and Gilman Rossignol of Wethersfield got married as teenagers in 1947. Now, 68 years later, they are still together.

"We had our differences over the years" but always worked them out.

"We're happy with our family," Joyce said.

"We get along good. I would say we're happy. He's Mr. Reliable," she added. "He worked days and I worked nights. We only saw each other on weekends."

"I'm a happy man. These have been happy years," Gilman said.

He recalled walking Joyce home one evening while they were still in high school and kissing her under the streetlight. He immediately knew she was the woman for him and never faltered from that belief.

"When I kissed her under that lamppost, that was it right there," he said.

Erwin and Helga Schramma of Farmington were married 63 years ago. They were a young couple when they came to America from their native Germany with a 5-week-old child in tow.

"Make sure you never go to bed mad. Always make up. Life is too short," Helga said.

She added that it's important to love your children and work with your spouse to raise them well.

"We keep our money separate," Erwin said.

But he quickly added that they share funds with each other as needed. He encourages husbands not to dominate their wives and to let them live their own lives. For example, he said some men of his generation don't like their wives to drive alone.

Eric and Edith Hartleb of Newington walked down the aisle 53 years ago.

"Listen to your wife. The sooner you learn to listen to your wife, the happier your marriage will be," Eric said. "You have to work together, be of one mind."

"You have to appreciate, be willing to give and take. Keep a sense of humor, stick together," Edith said.

Catherine and Vin Lawlor of Glastonbury have been married 65 years and offer some simple – but not necessarily easy – advice.

"We don't necessarily do everything together," Catherine said. "I do my thing and he does his, that's the secret. And we have to acknowledge that we have our likes and our dislikes."

Vin has a slightly different take on the subject.

"One of my co-workers told me once that she's a saint for putting up with me."

Catherine chuckled.

"Neither one of us is perfect," she said. **WL**

Nancy Thompson also contributed to this story.



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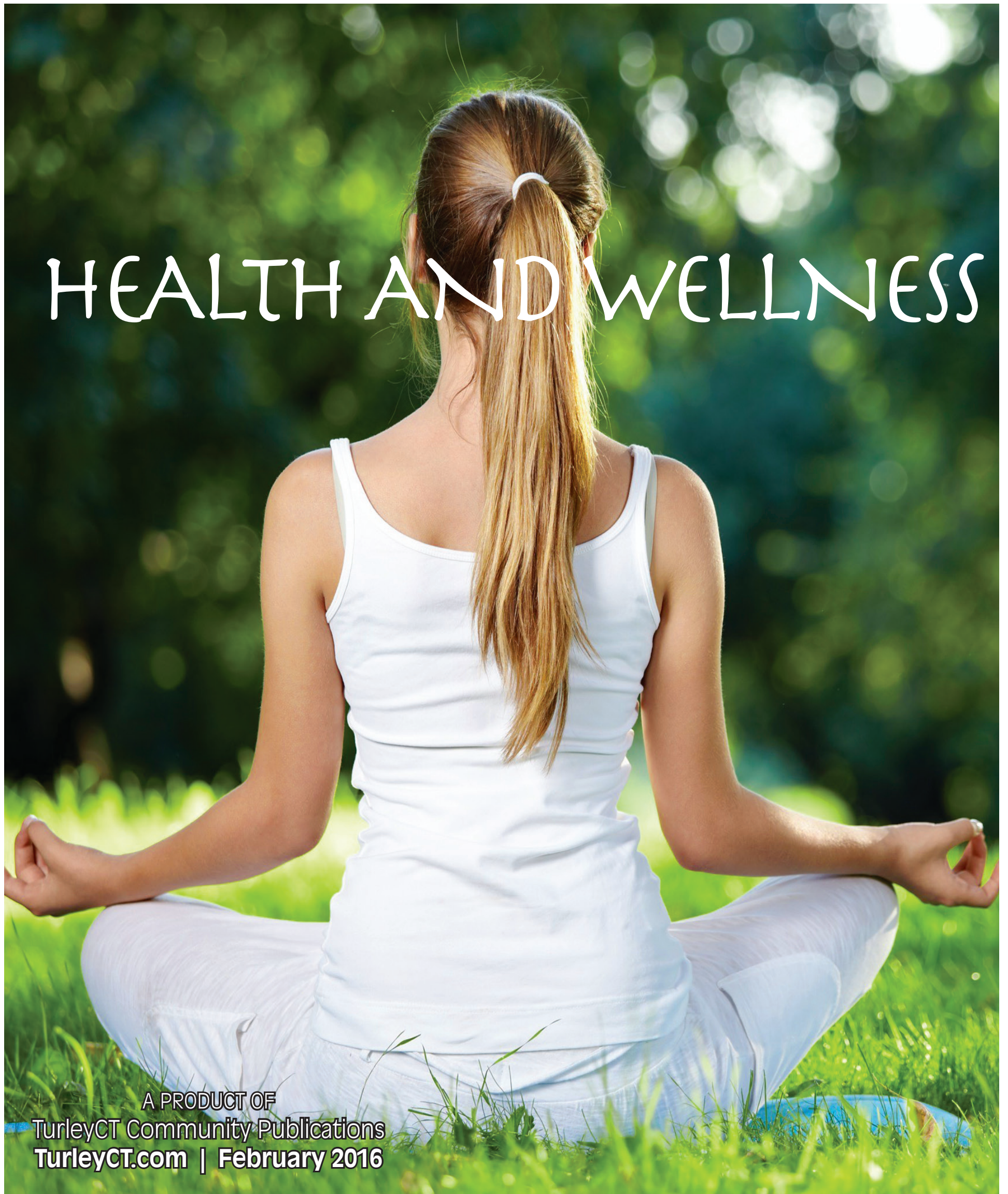
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Health & *Wellness*

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a heart

Locals bounce back from health scares

by **Mara Dresner**
Staff Writer

Sometimes major health events come out of the blue. Other times, the symptoms have been building for years, but we don't always know that they're a disaster in the making. These area residents have all faced major heart issues and are doing great on the other side. In honor of American Heart Month, they've shared their stories.

Name: Michael Fox

Age: 71

Hometown: Newington

Occupation: retired

Success story:

A couple years before the surgery, I was having problems catching my breath. I usually use the VA. They've been very good to me. Cardiology checked it out; they had gastroenterology check it out; the lung people. There wasn't really anything wrong. I had an angiogram a few years ago. There was some blockage but not enough to do anything about it. A year or so passed and this keeps going on and on.

On Oct. 12, Columbus Day, I take my regular bath, I read the paper, I'm having chest pain. It's the holiday. The VA here is closed. I decided to take an ambulance to Saint Francis. I'm glad I did.

They keep me overnight and say they're going to give me a nuclear stress test tomorrow, which is



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Health & Wellness

Tuesday. I take the nuclear stress test, and they say they need to do an angiogram. By Friday, after all the rigmarole, at 8 a.m., I'm in the operating room having double bypass. I had three blocked arteries, but I didn't have enough blood vessels to do all three.

After the surgery, I spent a couple of days at the hospital. Then I went to Jefferson House here in Newington for rehabilitation. I spent almost a week there. I'm home and scheduled for cardiac rehab. It's a three-month program and, boy, am I glad I did it.

I'm feeling so good now. I go in three days a week for an hour. I do treadmill work, stationary bike work and free weights. I walk a couple of miles at home two, three, maybe five days a week. I used to walk five miles a day.

I started getting used to eating salad either with lunch or for lunch. For breakfast, I have a fruit smoothie with nonfat yogurt or 2 percent milk. I lost 20 pounds. I feel much better. I could go dancing every night now.

Name: Mary Lu Maturro

Age: 75

Hometown: Wethersfield

Occupation: retired

Success story:

I've never had heart problems; I've never had anything. I've never been to the hospital except to have babies. Last March when I went to bed at night and would lie on my side, I would feel my heart pounding and I'd feel a pressure behind my sternum. I told my doctor and he did a cardiogram and sent me to the hospital. They did more tests and I continued on.

I exercised at the senior center three times a week. I liked to walk with friends at the Wethersfield Green, but whenever I would start walking, I'd get that pressure behind my breast bone, so I started to just meet them for coffee after. I'd get out of breath, but not terribly. I could still go on with my normal routine.

Then in the summertime, it got more frequent. On Labor Day weekend, I went to close two umbrellas outside, one by the pool and one by

the patio. I got so out of breath.

That had never happened and that frightened me.

I called my doctor and he said to go in for a cardiogram. There was a cancellation the next day. My doctor said, "We won't fool around." So, the following Wednesday, they did an angiogram. I figured everything would be fine. They told me I had 90 percent blockage in four arteries and I wouldn't be going home. It was done Friday morning on Sept. 11. I was in the hospital for about a week, then in Jefferson House.

I did really well there. Each week I felt better. I never had any pain to speak of. If I took a deep breath, it would hurt. I was all set to leave Jefferson House, when I got an infection in my leg, so I had to stay a little longer.

Now I feel great. I exercise three times a week at the hospital. Today, I signed up with the town's fitness room. I plan on walking on the treadmill. It makes me feel good, it makes my legs feel stronger. If I don't exercise, it makes it harder to go up

the stairs. I don't use salt at all. I feel like I'm in my 50s again!

Name: Carolyn Levine

Age: 71

Hometown: West Hartford

Occupation: professional conservator and certified geriatric care manager

Success story:

My job was quite stressful and I had high blood pressure. I was on medication for it, but I was very active. I never saw this coming.

We were at a friend's house for the evening playing cards and there were 12 of us or so and I just didn't feel that great. We went home and I was getting into bed and I got a terrible pain in back of my neck. So, I laid down on the bed and my husband called the doctor, a friend of ours, and he said, "Give her five minutes and if it happens again, go to the emergency room."

That's what we did. That was the first sign of anything. That's probably when the aortic aneurysm dissected. I went into the emergency room at about 11 at night and they started



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Dr. Ciarcia and Dr. Fusco

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Dr. Joseph Ciarcia is a lifelong resident of Wethersfield. He received his bachelor's degree in pathobiology from the University of Connecticut and his dental degree from the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine in 1990. Dr. Ciarcia returned to Connecticut after completing his one-year residency at Denver General Hospital in Denver, Colorado. Dr. Ciarcia and his wife Linda have two daughters, Alana and Natalie. When Dr. Ciarcia is not at work, he enjoys spending time with his family and playing with Dallas, his boxer/shepherd dog whom he adores. He also loves traveling, spending time at the beach and is a great cook!



Dr. Ciarcia



Dr. Fusco

Dr. Dominic L. Fusco III was raised in Wethersfield and now resides in Marlborough with his wife Dawn and their three children, Madison, Dylana and Dj. He received his bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Connecticut and his Doctorate of Dental Medicine from Tufts University in 1988. When Dr. Fusco is not working, he enjoys spending time with his family, taking his son to hockey games and fishing. He also loves music!

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Health & Wellness

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Eat better

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Lose weight

When you shed extra fat and unnecessary pounds, you reduce the burden on your heart, lungs, blood vessels and skeleton. You give yourself the gift of active living, you lower your blood pressure and you help yourself feel better, too.

Stop smoking

Cigarette smokers have a higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease. If you smoke, quitting is the best thing you can do for your health.

doing all kinds of tests, but nothing was showing up. My husband finally went home at 4 or 5 in the morning. I said, "Go get my clothes and my cell phone. I'll be going home in the morning."

The thoracic surgeon and cardiologist were there looking over all the records and they said, "You know what? I have one more test to do and if it's what I think it is, she'll need to go right into surgery. Only 1 percent of people survive a dissected aortic aneurysm. Even if she does come out of surgery, she'll be compromised because of the lack of oxygen. She will not be the person you know." That's how they left it with my husband and adult son and daughter, and 13 hours later I came out of surgery.

While in cardiac intensive care, I was a code blue. I stopped breathing and they had to re-intubate me. By the third week, they put me in the step-down cardiac unit. I had no idea until I was ready to go to rehab what really happened to me. I went to Mount Sinai Rehab/Saint Francis, I think for 12 days. When I started rehab, I wasn't really walking well at all and I kept falling asleep. In the first exercise, I had to take soft alphabet blocks and put them in order and I had no idea how to do that.

I had always been doing water aerobics. When I was healed and after I had physical therapy in my home, I went back to the water aerobics. I didn't have the appetite that I used to. I'd lost probably 35 pounds during all of this. I just had no taste for anything except one friend would make me carrot soup and I loved that and chicken soup and that's what my diet was for a long time.

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Health & Wellness

I'm doing great! Except if I talk too much, I do start coughing because my nerves were damaged in my throat from all the intubation, so my voice has changed a little bit. I have some swallowing issues. Other than that, I am perfectly fine.

When I got home from rehab, I started calling my clients; they're all elderly and they knew something had happened to me. I would talk to them on the phone and finally, I started going to visit them. I'm working full time. I remember all my clients and all their stories and I just love them. It's a rebirth; it's a miracle. I wear a bracelet all the time that says "blessed."

Name: Bonnie Gearin

Age: 71

Hometown: Farmington

Occupation: retired first and second grade teacher

Success story:

My mom died at the age of 50. There are heart problems on both sides of my parents' families, so I had always been conscious of this.

I had the heart attack in February 2003. In September/October (2002), all of us that taught little ones caught bronchitis. Everyone got rid of it; mine just lingered. I kept going back to the doctor. I became such a pest. I kept saying, "Are you sure this is not heart-related?" He treated me for pneumonia, for bronchitis. He diagnosed me with asthma and gave me an inhaler.

I was at Our Lady of Calvary Retreat, which is probably four minutes away from UConn [Health]. On Sunday morning, I felt short of breath, so I used the inhaler, which was not a good thing to use. I went up to mass, and Sister Ann said, "You look as white as ghost. Do I need to call 911?" I did not even hesitate. I said yes. I can't give you a reason. I knew there was something big going on.

There were two retreatants that weekend who were not scheduled to be there, two doctors from Long Island. They immediately came out and felt it was heart-related. That was a gift that they were there.

I went to the emergency room and they did all the blood work they do. Dr. David Hager in the cardiology department just happened to be available. He said to me, "I would really like to keep you overnight." I needed to get a substitute teacher. I had all the paper goods for a teacher breakfast the next day. I asked if I could go home and come back. I was all dressed to go, and he said they were going to keep me overnight. At 4 in the morning, I had what they call "the widow maker." The only reason I survived was I was already in the hospital; I was already in the cardiac unit.

Dr. Hager happened to have stayed in the hospital because he was there within seconds. Women need to know you might have a heart attack and not even know it. I was going to get a T-shirt that said, "I had a heart attack and I never even had a pain."

Dr. Hager put a stent in to open an artery that was 100 percent blocked and another was 75 or 80 percent blocked. UConn cardiology is absolutely phenomenal. That's a

good part of the reason I made such a healthy comeback. The care was outstanding.

I was in the hospital five days. I did go back to work. I made exercise a definite part of my day, and I shed some pounds. I did change my lifestyle. I was working on my master's at the same time. I was going to school, coping with teenagers, teaching, my eating habits were probably the worst. Burger King was where I stopped on the way home.

I see a physician's assistant every three or four months just to keep tabs on things. I exercise; I really try to adhere to the Mediterranean diet as close as possible. I feel great.

The last time I was at a cardiology appointment, the doctor told me if I saw a doctor who did not know I'd had a heart attack, that doctor would not be able to pick it up by listening to my heart. That heart attack did a lot of damage to my heart.

The fact I'm not exhibiting any evidence of having a heart attack, all in all, I think it's a pretty miraculous experience. **WL**

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About the Director

Joe Allen, PT, DPT, OCS received his BS in Nutrition and Sport from the University of Connecticut and his Doctorate of Physical therapy from Sacred Heart University. Joe is currently a Board Certified Orthopedic Specialist (OCS) and is certified in the Graston Technique for management of soft tissue injuries. Joe's clinical interests include manual therapy, post-surgical, chronic pain, and athletic and sport injuries. He is an active member of the Connecticut Physical Therapy Association and the Newington Chamber of Commerce.



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Dr. Thomas A. Brown

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Brown is a graduate of Wesleyan University in Middletown Conn and earned a Masters degree in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry from Boston University. He completed his medical training at the University College Dublin School of Medicine in Dublin, Ireland and the West Virginia University School of Medicine in Morgantown, W.V. He performed his clinical training in Internal Medicine at the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H.

Brown has an academic background and has been extensively published. He enjoys mentoring physician assistant, APRN, and medical students as he cares for patients.

In his free time, Brown enjoys spending time with his two girls, playing the piano, and golfing.



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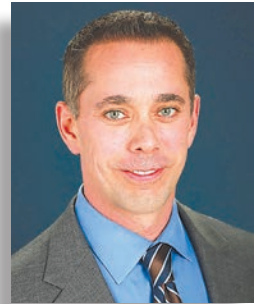
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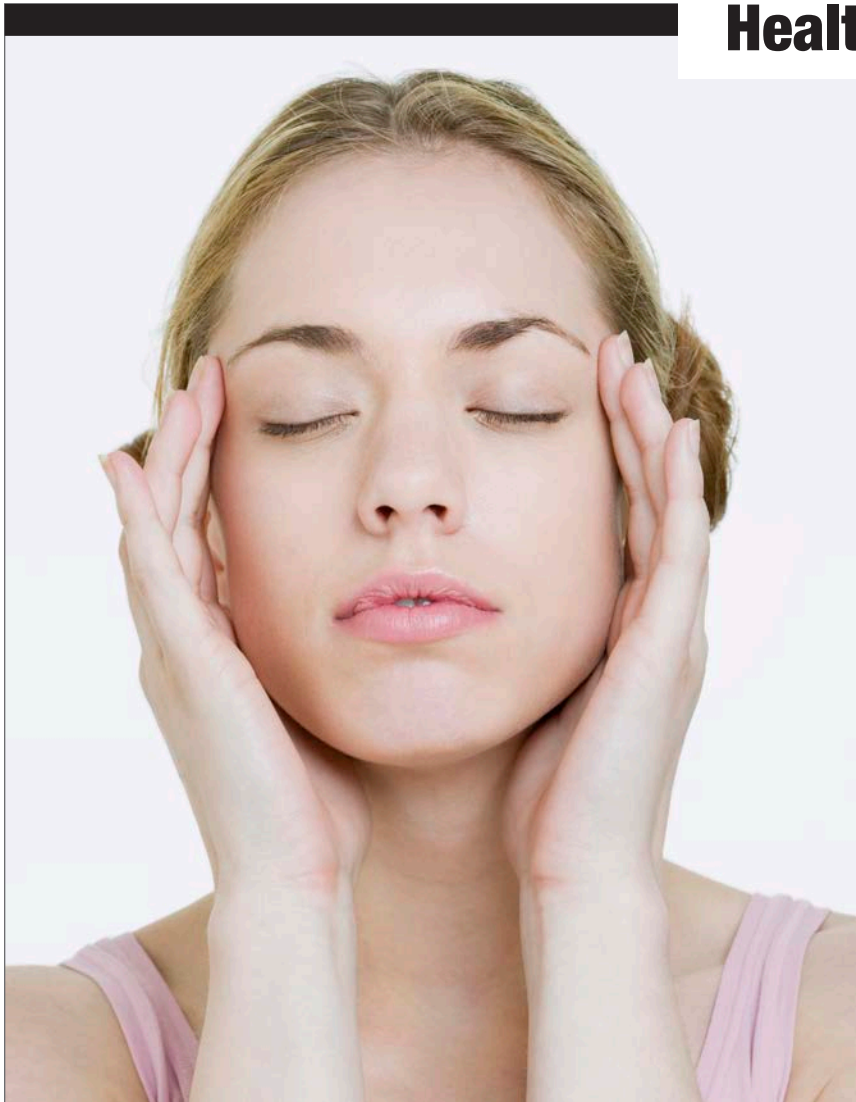
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Health & Wellness



Five ways to stay mentally *strong*

by **Alison Jalbert**
Assistant Editor

New Year's resolutions often include pledges to improve on physical strength, which is important, but an equally important area to work on is mental strength.

Being mentally strong can provide benefits in all areas of life.

Jayne Dean, a licensed marriage and family therapist and practicing psychotherapist at West Hartford Counseling Center, said there are many different aspects that make a person mentally healthy.

"They all relate to each other," she said. "If you pick one area, usually the other areas will begin to change."

Here are five ways to increase mental strength.

Take care of yourself. Basic things such as getting enough sleep, eating well and exercising are all key to being mentally strong, Dean said. It's also important to include quiet time in life, whether it's meditation, reflection, prayer, or simply taking time to rest.

Be aware of your emotions. Dean said "an expressed feeling is a managed feeling," meaning a person is able to identify what they are feeling and put it into words, either for themselves or to someone else.

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Health & Wellness

That helps manage stress and deal with emotional charges that happen in the body.

Identify bad habits and work toward breaking them. A habit is usually a way of managing stress or dealing with a need, Dean explained.

The path to eliminating that can be difficult, but it begins with a person recognizing they want to make a change and considering what need is met by what they're doing, whether it's smoking, overeating, drinking, compulsive exercising or rigidity.

"It begins there – having some compassion for yourself as to how that need came into existence," Dean said. "It starts with befriending and learning about the habit. That contemplation period is a very, very important part of the process. There are actually things happening in your brain to shift the pattern."

Habits can't necessarily be broken overnight, but starting to shift the way in which it's thought about shifts what a person can do about it, then the actual physical changes that need to be made will eventually happen.

Have a strong social network.

This is important for mental strength because it enables a person to be able to express themselves to another person, Dean said. It also means there are people around to do pleasurable activities with, and there are positive events planned on the calendar. Having a strong social circle also makes it easier to reach out and ask for help when it's needed.

Grow by encountering the new.

Seeking out and encountering new experiences, along with learning a new skill, trying something new, or

simply mixing up a routine can help with mental strength.

"We can all get habituated into automatically doing the same things the same way at the same time," Dean said.

"[Changing routines] can help build those mental muscles. Mix up those patterns, mix up those things that you do every day."

This does a lot neurologically.

"Doing things new and different allows more information to bubble up, to become available and guide you in everyday life." **WL**

"We can all get habituated into automatically doing the same things the same way at the same time. Changing routines] can help build those mental muscles. Mix up those patterns, mix up those things that you do every day."

– Jayne Dean, a licensed marriage and family therapist and practicing psychotherapist at West Hartford Counseling Center



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Health & Wellness

Finding *balance*

Experts offer thoughts on different approaches to wellness

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Whether the body is in pain that needs to be addressed or one seeks to develop a better mind and body connection, there are different ways to approach overall health and to give the body what it needs.

Physical Therapy

Eric Milman, co-owner of the Physical Therapy Center of Rocky Hill, said he takes a slightly different approach to wellness than other physical therapists.

"Our philosophy is a little bit outside of the box of most physical therapists," he said. "We really try

to figure out what mechanism is causing the pain."

Milman compared the view he and his partner, John Paholski, take on taking care of their bodies to car maintenance.

"It's like taking your car in for an inspection," he explained. "You want to find out what may lead to a break down in the future."

By looking at the whole body, and not only the part that is in pain, Milman said he can help to treat the ailment more efficiently and with long effects.

"Take for example if someone comes in with shoulder pain," he said. "It could be that your spine isn't



"It's like taking your car in for an inspection. You want to find out what may lead to a break down in the future."

– Eric Milman, co-owner of the Physical Therapy Center

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Health & Wellness

flexible enough, so when you reach up for things you feel it in your shoulder.”

By looking for the causes of pain throughout the entire body, Milman said he and his partner can work to erase pain and not just manage it.

“If your car is leaking oil, you can keep adding oil to it, but it hasn’t changed the leak,” he said.

At his practice, Milman said that each patient is looked at individually and has a program specifically developed for them.

All appointments are one-on-one, with the physical therapist allowing the professional to watch their clients as they complete their exercises.

“We think it’s important to give them that one-on-one attention to make sure they are completing it correctly,” Milman said. “Even if it’s a simple exercise, if you aren’t doing it correctly, it’s just a waste of time.”

According to Milman, this approach to wellness has many benefits, the largest of which being the ability to treat the cause of pain and discomfort instead of only the symptoms.

“We would like to think that one of the benefits is well-being going forward,” he said. “Hopefully, that person will get better and not need more therapy down the road.”

Low-Impact

For many people looking to increase their exercise, finding a low impact approach is necessary.

“Sometime the fitness world tends to think that pushing harder is always better, but Pilates has the approach that working smarter is better,” Jessica Fritz-Peters, owner of Pilates Defined in West Hartford, said.

“You don’t have to jump around to get a great workout,” Susan Valente, owner of Core Barre and Pilates Studio in Newington, said. “[Pilates] works the body safely and efficiently.”

Initially developed as a form of rehabilitation, Pilates is a low-impact approach to wellness that has participants engaging their core muscles and can be easily individualized for the greatest results.

Another approach that Valente teaches at her studio is barre, a ballet-inspired workout that Valente similarly describes as low- or no-impact.

In addition to the effects that these programs have during a class or one-on-one session, Pilates instructor Maggie Down, owner of Personal Euphoria Pilates in Wethersfield, said that these types of



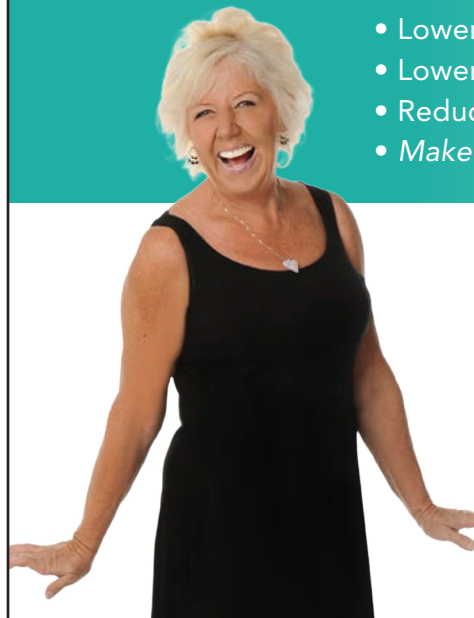
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Health & Wellness

exercise can have an impact on daily life.

"To me, one of the biggest benefits of Pilates is that it teaches you how to use your body properly, so whether you're walking, lifting laundry or just sitting at your desk, you're more in-tune with your body," she said.

Body and soul

When it comes to overall health, physical wellbeing is tied to our emotional wellbeing.

"There's some new research out that's very validating for what we do about how our body and our mind connections are so interrelated," said

"Yoga is the process of connecting breathing and movement, so it also is an opportunity to really start listening to your body. It's really part of a whole mindfulness experience."

Yoga has the potential to bring about a sense of calm, Leavitt said, and to become more in tune with

reached at 860-513-1431. West Hartford Yoga is located at 23 Brook Street, West Hartford. It can be reached at 860-953-9642 or online at www.westhartfordyoga.com. River Rock Yoga is located at 274 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. It can be reached at 860-757-3339 or at

"There's some new research out that's very validating for what we do about how our body and our mind connections are so interrelated."

– Sandy Byrne, owner of River Rock Yoga

"It's trying to make you aware of your body in all these different positions so you can transfer that to anything life may throw at you."

Both Valente and Fritz-Peters said they have seen similar benefits with their clients.

"It really comes down to strength and safety," Valente said. "The stronger you are, the safer you are in your body."

Sandy Byrne, owner of River Rock Yoga in Wethersfield. "The better I can feel and know my body, the more healthy I will be both emotionally and physically."

Because human beings hold stress physically, tension results.

"If we feel victorious, our bodies are open," Byrne said.

Jen Leavitt, studio manager at West Hartford Yoga, agrees.

their bodies.

"Yoga as we use the term in the western world means a lot of different things to a lot of different people," she said. "Keep working until you find what fits and know that there's really something for everyone." **WL**

Physical Therapy Center of Rocky Hill is located at 1975 Silas Deane Highway, Rocky Hill. It can be

www.rryoga.com. Pilates Defined is located at 1143 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford. It can be reached at 860-899-1515. Core Barre and Pilates Studio is located at 85 Market Square, Newington. It can be reached at 860-938-8751. Personal Euphoria is located at 400 Hartford Avenue, Wethersfield. It can be reached at 860-748-7574

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Health & Wellness

How to bake healthier *treats*

Baking can be a fun family activity and a rather delicious science experiment. Perhaps one of the few pitfalls of baking, however, is indulging in too many sweet treats when taste testing and then enjoying the fruits of your labors.

But bakers concerned about their health can substitute healthy ingredients when recipes call for foods bakers would prefer to avoid.

The following ingredients can make healthy additions to baked-good recipes without sacrificing flavor.

- **Whole wheat flour:** Refined white flour may not be the healthiest ingredient, so try whole wheat flour, which is full of nutrients and an extra dose of fiber.

Fiber can help lower the risk for heart disease and diabetes. Try slightly less than one cup of whole wheat flour for regular flour as a swap if a

recipe calls for one cup of flour.

- **Fruit puree:** When a recipe calls for oil, margarine, butter or shortening, consider replacing such ingredients with fruit purees, which often add moisture and texture just as well but without the same amount of calories.

- **Greek yogurt:** Greek yogurt is a powerhouse of protein and flavor with relatively few calories per serving. It can make a super substitution in recipes for things like sour cream, buttermilk or even cream cheese.

- **Applesauce:** Believe it or not, unsweetened applesauce also can replace some or all of the sugar in a recipe. When doing a 1:1 ratio swap, reduce the amount of liquid in the recipe by 1/4 cup.

- **Chocolate nibs:** Nibs are processed morsels that do not have the same amount of added sugar as many chocolate chips. Dark chocolate nibs can provide a healthy dose of antioxi-



dants as well.

- **Evaporated skim milk:** Try evaporated skim milk in place of heavy cream to make whipped cream for a low-fat option.

Baking brings family together, and the treats prepare can make an enjoyable finale to a great meal. With healthy substitutions, any recipe can be altered for the better. **WL**

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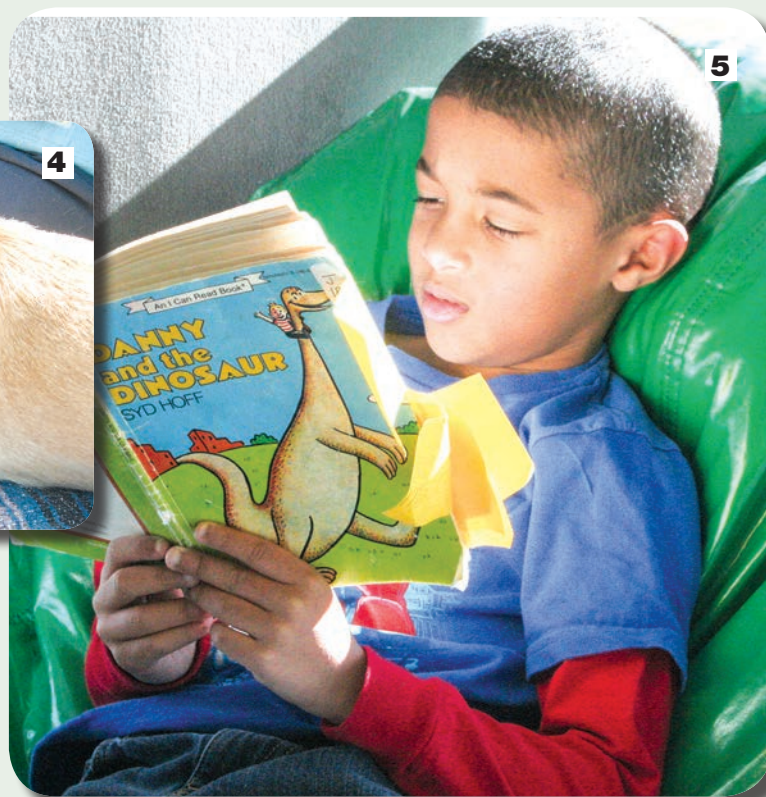
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Slice of LIFE

photos by Allie Rivera



Students at the CREC Discovery Academy have a new four-legged reading buddy. Kiri, a mixed black mouth cur, was rescued as a puppy by Elisabeth Holder. Kiri is a certified as a therapy dog and through Tails of Joy, part of Pet Partners, Holder and Kiri travel to elementary schools to provide a furry reading companion for students. The dog visits the school twice a month for one hour each time and students in grades 1-4 read to her for 15 minute increments.



1. Elisabeth Holder and her dog, Kiri, went through training and certification for Kiri to become a certified therapy dog. They visit nursing homes, libraries and schools. Kiri listens as 7-year-old Savannah Cruz reads to her. **2.** Before Kiri got ready to leave, Cameron Garneau, 7, took time to say hello, rub her head and give her a treat. **3.** Kiri is a relaxing presence who allows the children to read aloud without pressure. **4.** Kiri works with a company called Tails of Joy and is certified through Pet Partners to work with children in an educational setting. **5.** Mason Brown, 7, chose his favorite book, "Danny and the Dinosaur," for Kiri.



6. Jessica Rivera is the leader of Madres Latinas of Wethersfield. She updated the group on upcoming activities, including a Feb. 20 Zumba fundraiser at Hanmer School.

7. Madres Latinas of Wethersfield decided to thank the Wethersfield Police Department for the services it provides to the public every day. The group dropped off breakfast treats at the police station the morning of Jan. 13 and returned that evening with cookies, cakes and more for the night squad.

8. Madres Latinas used the facilities at the Pitkin Community Center to bake fresh cookies for the police. Lynn Ofori stirs the dough while young helpers Morgan Banahan, Alynne Escobar and Angelie Escobar form the cookies into shape for baking. Happily watching the proceedings is Jeanine Berasi.

photos by Mark Jahne

Your thoughts:

This month we asked residents:

"What are you most looking forward to in 2016?"
Here are some of their responses.



"Getting into nursing school."

– Katharine Kenney



"We're going to be moving, so I'm looking forward to that."

– Sarah Lee



"Saturday Night Live and all the sketches they're going to have about the election."

– Kerstin Stalcup

News roundup

Preschool program seeks peer playmates

The Wethersfield Public Schools are seeking children 3 years of age as of this coming Oct. 1 to participate in the Developmental Early Intervention Program for the 2016-2017 school year. This program includes children with developmental delays and same-aged children who act as peer playmates.

Classes are held at Webb School and run 2.5 hours per day, Monday through Thursday. Children are assigned to a morning or afternoon session and parents will be notified of the assignment upon acceptance. The cost per year for this program is \$1,050.

Peer playmates will be selected through a two-tiered lottery system. The application deadline is Feb. 26. Due to the expected volume of applications, a lottery will be held to select potential peer playmates. Those selected will be invited for a screening March 11.

A second lottery will be held after the screening to fill the number of open slots. Parents interested in completing an application should call Rosanne Zdok at 860-571-8141 to receive a registration application for the lottery.



It's party time

1. The Wethersfield Transition Academy hosted a party just before the winter school vacation at the Pitkin Community Center. Similar academies from public school districts in other nearby towns were invited to attend.

Test homes for radon

The Central Connecticut Health District encourages residents to test their homes for radon. It is a color-

less, odorless radioactive gas that results from the natural break down of uranium in soil, rock and water.

Exposure to radon gas indoors causes more than 20,000 deaths annually across the country. It is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers.

Those interested in testing the air quality in their homes may purchase an easy-to-follow radon test kit from the health district for \$8. Call 860-721-2822 or see ccthd.org.

Tax help is available

AARP Tax-Aide, a free program, provides income tax preparation assistance for low-income and middle-income taxpayers of all ages, with special attention to those 60 and older. If married, both husband and wife should be present during an income tax counseling session.

Taxpayers must bring all information and documents that apply to their 2015 income taxes to the Pitkin Community Center. The Wednesday

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sessions commence Feb. 10 and end April 13. To schedule an appointment with a certified tax-aide counselor call Wethersfield Social & Youth Services at 860-721-2977.

Apply for youth awards

The Wethersfield Youth Advisory Board is accepting applications for both its Annual Youth Volunteer Recognition Award Program and YAB IT! Scholarship. Both application forms can be downloaded from wethersfieldct.gov/social.

Completed applications must be submitted by March 1 to Wethersfield Social and Youth Services Attn.: YAB, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, CT 06109. For more information call 860-721-2977.

Each year the Youth Advisory Board recognizes students in grades 5-12 who have donated their time, energy and talents and demonstrated the true meaning of volunteerism. Volunteer opportunities include: Thanksgiving food drives; Special Olympics; volunteer work at hospitals, nursing homes or day care centers; reading programs for elementary students; Habitat for Humanity, Scouts, Police Explorers, and fundraisers or events for other charitable organizations.

All youth who meet the volunteer requirements will be formally recognized at the Youth Volunteer Recognition Event at 7 p.m. April 5 at the Pitkin Community Center.

In order to be eligible for the YAB IT! Scholarship, applicants must: be a Wethersfield High School senior currently enrolled at Wethersfield High School, a magnet school, or any other private high school in Connecticut; have proven

community service of 80 hours or more accrued during time of high school, 20 hours of which must come from senior year; and a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 throughout high school.

Funeral home saves lives

DNA Memorial has named D'Esopo Funeral Chapel a licensed provider offering its services and products. D'Esopo is believed to be the first funeral home in New England to provide genetic preservation (DNA collection) to funeral consumers.

DNA Memorial is a company that has developed a proprietary method of extracting DNA from a non-invasive mouth swab or hair sample and binding the DNA to a substrate. The process allows the DNA to be stored at room temperature indefinitely.

This genetic information can then be used for a variety of family medical reasons, such as testing for genetic mutations, predicting how someone will metabolize a drug, determining the best therapy to treat cancer and determining the likelihood of inheriting a genetic disease.

This breakthrough technology provides consumers the ability to "bank" their own (or a deceased loved one's) genetic record securely at home. Consumers who are pre-planning their own funerals may purchase personal DNA as part of their end-of-life planning documents and records.

EDIC presents awards

The town Economic Development & Improvement Commission held its annual dinner in December at

which it granted several awards to local businesses. The Wethersfield Village Improvement Association Award was presented to Kathy's Urgent Care and Adrian L. Bludeau, CPA, P.C.

Longevity awards went to: A Victorian Garden, Adrian L. Bludeau CPA, Aegis Inc., Chester Bulkley House Bed & Breakfast, Chimirri's Italian Pastry Shoppe, Conte & Lucas Realtors, Gravers Tree Care, Kevin P. McGrath M.D., Lyons & Wraight Insurance, Wespro Concrete Innovations, Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce and Wethersfield Travel.

Art and John Tsombanis, Christopher and Martha Henney, CREC Discovery Academy, D&D Market, Harvey Sprung, Kathy's Urgent Care and Wethersfield Diner were the recipients of special recognition awards.

The Betty H. Rosania Award went to John H. Miller, P.E. The Col. John Chester Jr. Ancient Fife & Drum Corps and Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association were honored with tourism awards.

The EDIC also named the top participants in the annual town

photo contest. Ruth Lamy was the winner and Osvaldo Ferrari finished second. Brian Drouin and George Savic finished third and fourth, respectively.

Arts academy update

The Wethersfield Academy for the Arts offers a pair of lectures in the coming weeks. Blade smithing with Bill Hoffman is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Feb. 16 at the academy, 431 Hartford Ave. John Codianni will speak about antique gem appraisal at the same time March 15. The suggested donation for each lecture is \$10.

Youth art classes are ongoing and run for six weeks in two-hour increments. Drawing and painting with Nick Frasco is held from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Saturdays. Children will learn the fundamentals of drawing, composition and painting.

Nature journaling for teenagers is another ongoing course. It takes place from 3:45-5:45 p.m. Tuesdays.

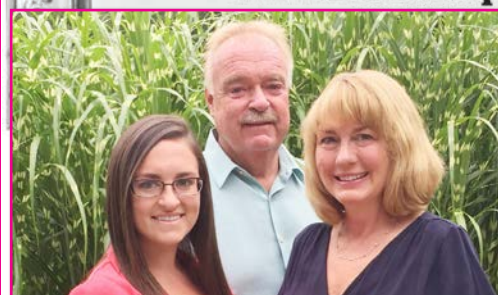
For more information see wethersfieldarts.org or call 860-436-9857. **WL**

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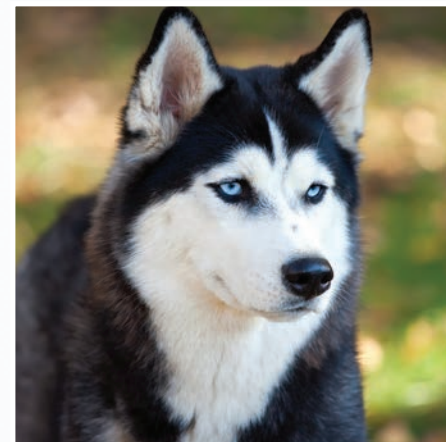
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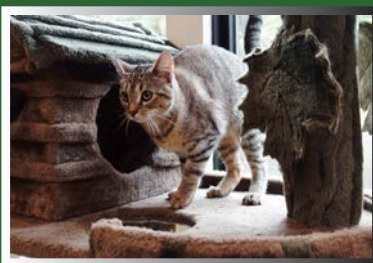
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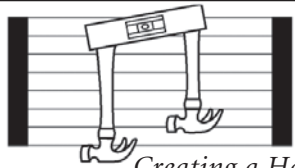
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Editorial

Holding the line on taxes

It's budget season in town, the time of year when leaders of the schools and general government sit down to figure out what to give the public in terms of services. Then they compute how much to charge in taxes to pay for those services.

It's a challenging time for elected officials. Long hours of meetings, lost family time and enough numbers to make one's head spin. They deserve credit for taking on this daunting task.

But as they do so, they need to consider certain facts.

The first is that Connecticut still has not recovered from the recession that started in the early part of this millennium and really kicked in with a vengeance in 2007. State politicians can talk all they want about a supposedly better business climate, or higher job rates, but the fact remains that far too many people are still struggling to make ends meet.

Those who are unemployed are finding it increasingly difficult to find new jobs before their benefits run out. The jobs just aren't there. So they end up taking low-wage retail or fast food jobs just to have some kind of a paycheck.

Senior citizens often talk about the pressure of living on a fixed income. The same is true for working people whose paychecks are the same every two weeks, paychecks that in many cases are lower than they were five years ago.

Businesses are asking employees to do more and paying them less. It's not that they are evil, most of them are doing it in order to survive. That's particularly true of small businesses.

It's tough for all of the folks mentioned above to read that teachers and town employees are getting raises, even if the numbers are only 1 or 2 percent.

Do they deserve it? In most cases, yes. But residents who have not received a raise in many years, and who have seen their own household costs rise, are the ones who have to pay the bills. Struggling businesses are in the same boat in terms of shouldering a higher tax burden.

Elected officials need to be cognizant of this. The hardest question they have to answer each year at budget time is how much the townspeople can afford.

Most of the money to run municipal government and schools comes from the property and motor vehicle taxes. We certainly can't look to state government for help, not with the dire financial straits it is in.

That comes from years of spending every dollar they could find as fast as they could find it and not doing any meaningful cutting. Now they want to bring highway and bridge tolls back to provide even more revenue, forgetting that they were removed because they created safety hazards.

Municipal budgets can be cut. Yes, contractual obligations make up most of the spending, but there are areas where a little trimming here and there would provide welcome relief to the taxpayers.

We would hope that the Town Council and Board of Education can do so without resorting to the old tried and true scare tactics such as limiting the number of police officers or snow plows on the street, or threatening to obliterate scholastic sports or music.

This job was never meant to be easy. Those who ran for and now serve in elective office need to do their best to keep taxes down, for the benefit of everyone. **WL**

Letter

The dream that shaped a generation

To the Editor:

I woke up early in the morning eager to observe Martin Luther King Day. And I could only think of how grateful I am for the meaning of his legacy that he left for future generations affecting all ages, ethnicities, religions, LGBT rights, students and employees, all whom have benefited from his non-violent civil rights movement for equal rights, most importantly about integration instead of segregation.

As a child I remember his "I Have a Dream" speech. This

inspired me to become a civil rights activist and advocate. As a Puerto Rican, which is a race of many races, this is vital and a passion for me.

To advocate for those who are being discriminated against daily, as our freedom must not be taken for granted. Even though we live in a great melting pot, there are still many struggles with acceptance in this great country that I love – America.

I am inspired by those before me and for those that will continue the struggle in

the future. May our future generations not forget our past history and make efforts towards equality for all generations.

My advice to you is to give back to your community and learn as much as you can. Perseverance, patience and education are key.

And always remember the dream: "I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

–Martin Luther King, Jr.

– Carmen Saez

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540 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070
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KEITH TURLEY, Publisher

EDITORIAL

Abigail Albair, Executive Editor
aalbair@turleyct.com

Mark Jahne, Editor

Alison Jalbert, Assistant Editor

STAFF WRITERS

Alicia B. Smith, **Allie Rivera**, **Mara Dresner**,
David Heuschkel, **Ted Glanzer**,
Sloan Brewster

ADVERTISING SALES

Melissa Friedman, Advertising Director
melissa@turleyct.com, 860-978-1345

Alana DiMarco

alana@turleyct.com, 860-264-5723

PAGE DESIGNERS

Daniel Kornegay, **Cynthia Martel**,
Robert Sirois

GRAPHICS DEPARTMENT

Barbara Ouellette, Production Manager
ads@turleyct.com, 860-264-5523

Maureen LaBier, Production Assistant

Corley Fleming, **Cynthia Martel**,
Kathy Kokoszka, **Cindie Cagenello**

CIRCULATION

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



An Impressive 365 Days!

Here are the highlights, records have been kept since 1905 for the Hartford Area... the location of measurement currently is Windsor Locks:

- The first quarter (January, February, and March) was the all-time coldest
- February was brutally cold with an average temperature of 16.1 degrees, making it the all-time

coldest month; it was also the 3rd snowiest February with a total of 31.9 inches

- May was the warmest with an average temperature of 66.1 degrees (6.6 degrees warmer than normal)
- 18 days featured a temperature 90 degrees or higher (which is only 1 day above the annual average), the hottest temperature was 95 degrees on July 29th

- No tornadoes were reported in Connecticut, and there was no direct impact from any tropical system

- The autumn season (September, October, and November) tied for the 5th warmest on record

- The year was dry, in fact much of the state was classified in a 'moderate' drought with total precipitation at 39.21 inches, which

is 6.64 inches below normal

- December goes down as the warmest with an average temperature of 43.3 degrees, an amazing 11.7 degrees above normal... more incredible: it was 4.7 degrees warmer than the previous record of 38.6 degrees in December of 1923!

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